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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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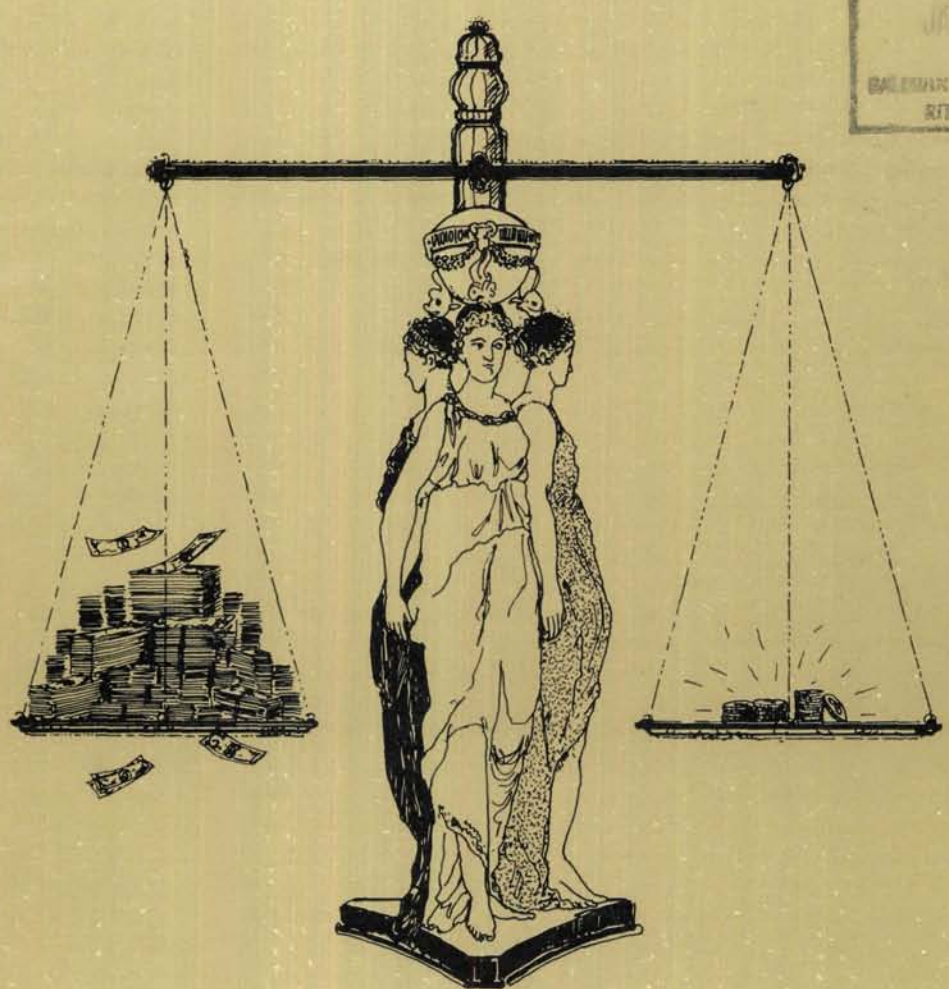

Why Wars Come Only Once a Generation—*Paul Fussell*

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TRB

from Washington
January 19, 1980

Strike Three

The sifting snow turns the White House into a Christmas card. Cars on Pennsylvania Avenue have a frosting of ice. Round the empty fountain the bushes are buried in snow and fluffs hang in the elm branches like pillows. TV crews stand by their tripods in front of the placid mansion waiting for the next bulletin; their cables coil out behind like snakes. This is Washington after Moscow launched its Christmas Day blitzkrieg against Afghanistan. Suddenly old values are changed and everything is altered.

President Carter leaves the room where he is having lunch with a group of reporters to take a call from Secretary Vance. He comes back troubled, almost shaken. Russian troops in uniform are still landing at Kabul, he says. The number is far above 20,000 now. Big carriers glide in, one behind the other, at the airport. They unload helicopters, tanks, trucks. Yesterday Carter used the hotline in Moscow to protest to Brezhnev. Now it's the new year, a new decade; the country has come out of its Christmas holiday doze. Carter's mood has hardened; the enormity of the thing hits him. Can he convey it to the nation?

This is the first time since World War II the Soviet Union has used its troops outside the Warsaw bloc. The National Security Council is startled that Moscow would take such risks. Evidently the Soviets appraised the consequences and decided they were worth taking. Can America teach the Russians that the costs are too great? Will Americans accept the sacrifices involved?

Republican presidential hopefuls and Senator Kennedy tell the Iowa farmers before next week's caucus that Carter hasn't been tough enough, but that his drastic grain cut-off is unfair. "The American farmer will pay the price for an ineffective foreign policy," says Teddy Kennedy. Representative John Anderson of Illinois is an exception; he's a candidate too. The people may be more united than the politicians, he tells the Des Moines Republican forum. He ridicules rivals' pretensions: how do you get oil, cut taxes, increase defense spending, and balance the budget? "It's easy," he says. "You do it with mirrors." The Iowa audience gives him a little burst of applause almost in spite of itself.

Carter puts SALT II on the shelf (for now anyway) and suddenly the world is a more dangerous place. For the third time in a century a hopeful American effort to take a step forward, however small, to anticipate and thwart the forces that increasingly threaten civilization has apparently failed. The first failure came 60 years ago. In 1920 the United States Senate finally told President Wilson that it could not ratify the League of Nations after a war that brought 320,000 American casualties. Isolationists, led by Henry Cabot Lodge, gleefully affixed 15 reservations to the ratification. (One of them concerned Irish self-determination.) What need had America for a League? We were impregnably protected by two oceans. We were the mechanical wonder of the world: in 1920 Henry Ford was turning out 6000 Model Ts a day. The League was defeated because of the safeguard written into the Constitution in the sailing-ship era, giving treaty veto power to one-third plus one of the Senate. "At all times, during the prolonged debate over the Treaty," say Morison and Commager in their *Growth of the American Republic*, "more than three-fourths of the members of the Senate were ready to accept membership in the League in some form or other." Wilson predicted another war if the League failed, and it arrived punctually.

The second comparable failure, I believe, came in Truman's time: the vain effort to internationalize control of the atomic bomb. The bomb that exploded a few thousand feet above Hiroshima killed more than 78,000 people, most of them instantly. The one at Nagasaki two days later killed even more. Truman asked Dean Acheson and David Lilienthal to work out a system for international control of the weapon to which the US then had a monopoly. To succeed it would be necessary at some point to assume the good faith of the Soviet Union. The gulf of mistrust was deep, yet their plan was ingenious. They proposed an international Atomic Development Authority, progress by stages, and an ultimate sharing of secrets. Truman turned the report over to Bernard Baruch, a vain and shallow poseur. Lilienthal wrote of this choice, "I was quite sick." Baruch had a reputation as former chairman of the War Industries Board and would help the plan through the Senate, Secretary of State Byrnes believed. Baruch's version guaranteed Soviet rejection. He introduced it in the memorable phrase (coined by a ghost writer), "We are here to make a choice between the quick and the dead." Americans felt noble—they were giving up the secret of the bomb in return for controls; but Stalin almost had his own bomb by this time. How any agreement on this subject could win approval of both Stalin and the Senate, nobody knows. This one couldn't. A third of a century later, the construction of nuclear weapons is still proliferating among nations though, for all that time, no bomb actually has been used in war in the grim choice between the quick and the dead.

So now we come to the third choice of the century—SALT II—and I imagine it will end in failure like the other two. Perhaps I exaggerate it. Men of good will can differ. They did over control of the bomb; they did over the League. *Reader's Digest* told its immense audience in several articles how very dangerous the SALT treaty is, and it permitted no rebuttal. I am inclined to follow the reasoning in a study by *Time* magazine last week, headed "What Happens if SALT Dies?—Far from being hurt Moscow is free to build new weapons." Exactly! Defense Secretary Brown said failure could add $30 billion to our arms budget in 10 years. Worse, it might destroy the whole process of mutual efforts at nuclear control. Belief that the Senate couldn't muster the two-thirds ratification vote may have played a part in Moscow's Afghanistan decision. How many times can nations vainly try to control war without striking out?

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Correspondence

A rose by any other name

To the editors:

With respect to the continuing travail of Indochina, your journal has hardly distinguished itself from the rest of the popular press in soundness of judgment and regard for fact. But ignorance even of the countries' names is really too much. Vietnam has never been known as the "People's Republic of Vietnam," a fact that Walter Laqueur (*TNR*, December 8, 1979) apparently will be surprised to learn. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam declared independence September 2, 1945, and turned itself into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in June 1976.

William S. Turley
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
Carbondale, Illinois

Parliamentary critic

To the editors:

TRB's continuous song of praise to the parliamentary system must be qualified in order that people do not come to see it as a cure-all to our problems. Its merits—the brevity of the campaign season, the capacity for speedy and unhindered passage of the party program, and the discipline it requires within the party—are offset in many cases by serious shortcomings.

First, the parliamentary system does indeed seem to offer an alternative to the slow, plodding pace of our Congress, a body that in eight years has not enacted a major energy program. But in the long run, the parliamentary system advances no more rapidly. The changes brought about by one party can be erased just as swiftly when the opposition comes to power. So we see in England a new Conservative government pledged to dismantle much of the state apparatus erected under more liberal governments.

Second, the parliamentary system often gives power to minor parties far in excess of their actual representation. In Israel, Menahem Begin was obliged to make a coalition with the tiny National Religious party and give some of its members a place in his cabinet in order to form a government.

Third, our system has the major advantage of providing new, fresh leadership at top positions, virtually unheard of under the parliamentary method. The prime minister, who often has spent 20 to 30 years rising in the ranks, may find it difficult to present novel approaches to problems. In our system, it is not inconceivable that a political newcomer can arise who can offer a new perspective on the issues of the day.

Fourth, the government may fall, under the parliamentary system, over a relatively minor issue, plunging the country into an unneeded and unwanted campaign. Canada's upcoming elections, only six months after the last ones, arose over a dispute on increasing the tax on gasoline, a problem our legislature has grappled with for some time without falling apart.

Finally, should the government receive a vote of no confidence at a time of major crisis, the parliament could be dissolved, depriving the country of leadership at a time when it is vital that someone be in command.

Both systems have their advantages and disadvantages. Switching one set of institutions for another hides the true answer to better government, which is, and which always has been, the quality of the people who serve it.

Robert Levy
West Simsbury, Connecticut

Black and white exposure

To the editors:

John Osborne is mystified by the "White Balance" a black cameraman is trying to achieve (White House Watch: "Cooling It," *TNR*, November 24, 1979). Photographing blacks and whites together presents a delicate exposure problem: if you let enough light reach the film from the black faces to get their features, the white faces will be "whited" out. Conversely, the correct exposure that brings out detail in white faces will black out black faces.

Bill Krause
Glendale, California

Ad hominem book review

To the editors:

I grudgingly stomached *TNR*'s vague editorial criticism ("Kennedy's Code," *TNR*, September 22, 1979) that Senator Kennedy's "half-shadowy presence discourages the emergence of other liberal alternatives to Carter. . . ." And I somehow managed to digest Morton Kondracke's suggestion ("Kennedy's World," *TNR*, November 10, 1979) that Kennedy name his cabinet "in advance of the election, so that voters will understand the policy cast his administration will take."

I accepted all this in the name of liberal devil advocacy. But I must now draw the line. I refuse to accept Garry Wills's December 1 *ad hominem* attack on the senator in the guise of a book review. Why the editors allowed an obviously biased conservative to review *Our Day and Generation: The Words of Edward M. Kennedy* (granted, worthless) in the first place is one question. But why they allowed Wills's asinine comments on Kennedy's sex life and political strategy to remain in the article is perhaps one of even greater bearing. Just when I get used to finding all of the editorial comment in the front of your publication, I find this garbled piece of opinion on page 39. No doubt all done in the sacred name of unbiased journalism, free press, etc.

Michael E. Nogay, Editor
The Daily Athenaeum
West Virginia University
Morgantown, West Virginia

A libertarian champion

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer's "The Myth of Thomas Szasz" (*TNR*, December 22, 1979) makes certain points against the psychiatric view Szasz advocates, but the essay also is used as an indictment of libertarianism. I wish to indicate why showing Szasz mistaken on some points will not succeed in showing that libertarian political theory is false.

Roughly, Szasz's case against involuntary mental hospitalization and paternalism rests on the view that so-called mental illness, unless grounded in physical malfunction, is but a deviant way of conducting oneself. Since such conduct is a matter of choice, to treat it as if the agent were unable to exercise self-control is to involve oneself—and, in the case of governments, the state—in violation of individual rights, namely, the right to act as one sees fit.

The conclusion here is libertarian, but the argument (including the crucial premise about mental illness) is not uniquely libertarian at all. The position Szasz holds on mental illness could well support nonlibertarian conclusions, e.g., that the state should suppress deviant conduct on grounds that this conduct is

(continued on page 40)

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

January 19, 1980

After Detente

It may be that nothing can be done now to free Afghanistan from the murderous embrace of the Soviet Union. Certainly the Kremlin is not likely to heed the decent opinion of mankind in this matter, having long ago inured itself to ethical qualms about the conduct of foreign policy. The Kremlin also will not be inhibited in central Asia by dissent at home: film stars will not agitate against the invasion; television will not show the atrocities of war; soldiers will not refuse to fight; opposition leaders will not visit and give comfort to the rebels. All of this may be a part of the glory of our politics, but the absence of it is not the weakness of theirs. If Afghanistan is the Soviet Vietnam, the may really win it.

Nevertheless, President Carter has acted appropriately, if belatedly, in demonstrating that aggression will not be entirely cost-free to the Soviets. By limiting our trade with the USSR in grains and technology, moreover, he has forcefully enunciated an important moral and political proposition: American productivity and ingenuity should not be accomplices in the victories of Russian imperialism. We should be grateful for the president's conversion from the State Department's complacent view of Soviet intentions in the world. The response to the grain embargo has been a wonderful litmus test for Carter's Republican rivals, all of whom (except the big "except" these days, John Anderson) leaped to play petty veto-group politics. Stephen Chapman examines their response on page 12, but a special word here about Senator Kennedy. Expressing his "outrage" at the "naked intervention" of the Russians in Afghanistan, calling on the country to be "firm with its foes," Kennedy nevertheless termed the ending of grain sales "unworkable and unfair" to American farmers and taxpayers. There is a lot of "many of us are troubled, I am troubled, you are troubled" in Kennedy's speeches, but no hard ideas about what firmness entails, except one or two that he's opposed for years until very recently. Kennedy's elevated talk about national purpose masks a peculiarly impoverished and fragmented vision of the national polity. He sees the country primarily as a patchwork of interests, and pursues the presidency largely by promising different (and often conflicting) rewards and protections for these interests. This is not unusual among modern politicians, to be sure. But Kennedy has not yet articulated anything remotely resembling a public or common or unifying interest, except that he may imagine this to be the inevitable consequence of his election. In the present depressed condition of the Kennedy campaign, it is almost inconceivable that the candidate would have told the farmers of Iowa that some long-range national imperatives took precedence over their immediate economic interest. Kennedy has gone so far as to say that there will never be an occasion when he would embargo grain. (His press secretary later said that war doesn't count in this absolutist formulation.) Kennedy seems to have a special fascination for nostrums without cost—still contending, for example, that Americans will conserve energy while

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the price they pay for it remains far below what it costs.

"No one segment of society should bear the burden. . . ." It's not a sentiment you hear often from Ronald Reagan who isn't known to empathize much with the unemployed, for example. But that's exactly how he put it at the end of what may be the most preposterous line of his entire career: "The Soviets did not invade Afghanistan with hogs, livestock and chickens, so I don't see the purpose in preventing them from getting 17 million tons of grain." That's also just about how the *Wall Street Journal* views economic warfare: nothing should conflict with business as usual. It's not the working class, as some old socialists and their enemies used to believe, that has no fatherland. It's corporate capitalism. Which is why there was lots of gnashing of teeth and hand-wringing among the bankers when President Carter froze Iranian assets in the USA. None were more faithful to the illusions of detente than the top executives of the *Fortune* 500. Oh, yes, some blood might have to be shed on occasion to keep the ideological frontiers clear, but we'd never have to stop selling the Russians Pepsi. Everybody wants the US to be tough with the Russians, but no one wants to pay the price of this toughness in his own currency. Not the farmers, not the computer manufacturers, not even American Olympic sportsmen whose arguments in favor of going to Moscow this summer were last heard in 1936 when the destination was Berlin.

Governor Jerry Brown was doubtless correct when he observed that "the Russians take whatever they can get away with. If they think they can have another country just for the cost of a few fish, some grain, and the Americans running in the Olympics, then maybe they think it's a good bargain." But the measures that President Carter has taken do not exhaust the options at our disposal.

The Soviet Union is vulnerable. To its east, the modernization of China's military capability remains a dread prospect. What Defense Secretary Harold Brown seems to have said on his trip to Beijing must now be troubling the sleep of Russia's generals. Therefore this is a most propitious time to begin a program of equipping the Chinese Air Force with up-to-date jet fighters. The present circumstances may oblige us to do things we might have preferred not to do, at least not yet. Whatever assistance we offer China must be reciprocated, therefore, by a solemn undertaking from the Hua government that this aid not be used to intimidate Taiwan.

China's ally, Pakistan, is another place where events seem to have changed our minds, and quickly. There is pressure to lift the present ban on US military sales to Pakistan, imposed because of that nation's refusal to take the non-nuclear pledge. It is in our interest, of course, to see Pakistan's defenses strengthened, but it obviously is even more in the interest of the Pakistanis, who can now readily imagine direct Soviet pressure on their territory. So it's not clear why the crisis should force us to give in on the nuclear question. Indeed, if we can't persuade Pakistan to give up its nuclear ambitions in exchange for US military aid, our arming of that country will be a sign not of American strength but of greater American weakness. Nor should we allow our enthusiasm for resistance to the Russians and our distaste for Madame Gandhi (no, the wicked witch is not dead) to persuade us that the Pakistani regime is anything other than a tyranny whose only popular support is the kind of mob support that swept Khomeini into power in neighboring Iran. Even the Afghani rebels are not exactly your better class of victims, being quite capable of fanaticism and routine brutalities themselves. But that doesn't mean they should be left unaided to what Marxist destiny intends for them.

The Soviet Union's greatest vulnerability is not on its eastern or southern borders, but on its western ones. There the Warsaw Pact countries, bound to Moscow less by solidarity than by fear, seem always poised for some new show of independence and national idiosyncrasy. The Kremlin hates the auguries of instability in the communist empire suggested by such developments, and the Soviets make enormous efforts to maintain the visible unity of the bloc. One of the reasons these efforts have been so successful is that the advanced Western capitalisms, and the US in the lead among them, have relieved the Soviet Union of the burden of Eastern European economic development. Poland, for example, currently enjoys $10 billion in American credits. Hungary is one of the countries having "most favored nation" trading status with the US. There and elsewhere, our technology is the foundation of the modernizing process. Thus, our country has provided some pivotal communist countries with the added margin of prosperity that keeps people politically quiescent. If the US did none of this, the obligation would fall to the USSR. But it would not be an obligation the Soviets could meet. The investment of capital alone would be beyond Russia's means, unless Moscow were to divert the capital from its foreign adventures—which would be precisely the point.

Eastern Europe remains the Achilles' heel of Soviet power. After 35 years of communism, there does not appear to be one regime in the bloc that can rely on the loyalty of its population. All the same, the West has virtually ceded these people to the Soviet empire. What the Helsinki agreements won for the Russians was recognition by the democratic nations of the permanency of postwar arrangements: wherever the Red Army had conquered would now lie unchallenged in the Soviet sphere of influence.

The Soviets were so eager for this accord that they pledged all kinds of reforms and improvements with respect to human rights. They continue to violate these commitments. One symptomatic instance: in planning for the Moscow Olympics, the commissars are organizing a mass exodus of children from the capital, to

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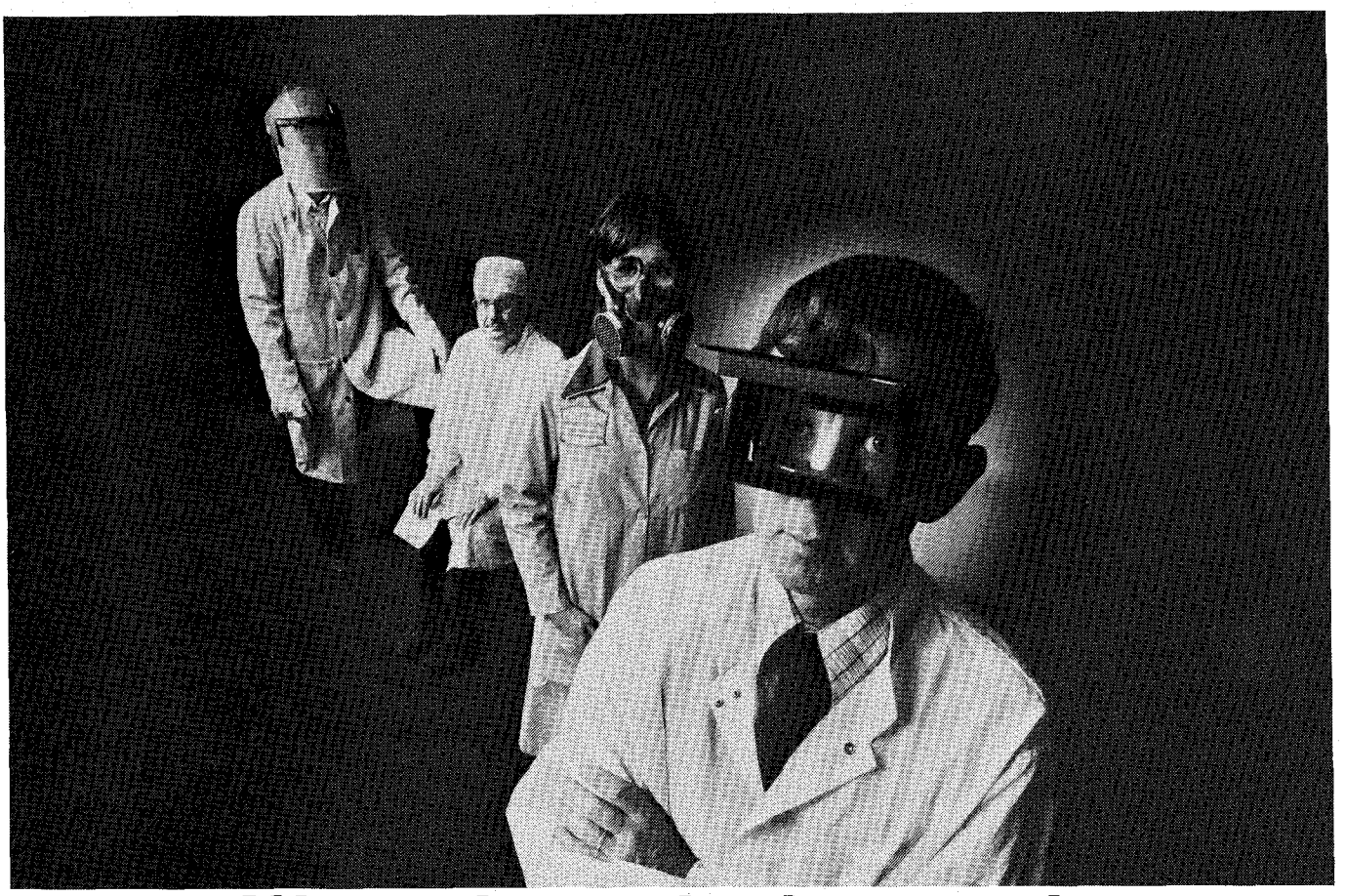

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prevent the free contact of Russian youth with foreigners and their values. All that is left of Helsinki are the West's undertakings to the USSR. Since the Russians continue to repudiate not merely the letter of Helsinki but its spirit, by intensifying conflict in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, we should let it be known that we also are no longer willing to underwrite Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. That should be the unavoidable consequence for the Russians of having defied, as the *New York Times* put it, "the unwritten code that a generaton of Soviet and American leaders had evolved to contain their rivalry."

From now on, our credits and technology should be available only to governments that choose to test and stretch their Russian connection beyond the limits determined by Moscow. If Hungary wants to support the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, let it be with the clear understanding that Budapest must now turn to its comrade in the East for assistance, rather than to the West. As long as the Soviet Union presses the US and our friends, we have a reciprocal concrete interest in Russia's troubles.

The support from Western Europe for the strengthening of our resolve in the face of Soviet provocations is both instructive and encouraging. Our European allies are especially sensitive to America's leadership capacity. If the US itself seems phlegmatic under Russian pressure, if it vacillates on defense strategy, Washington can hardly expect London, Bonn, and Paris to behave otherwise. Western Europe also understands its stake in Eastern Europe. If the Soviet grip is secure there, it may seek to extend its sway toward the Atlantic. With Tito in the deep dusk of his life, Yugoslavia soon will offer the Soviets an almost irresistible opportunity to consolidate their power in the Balkans. The independence of Yugoslavia has been a festering offense to Russians for a generation. How today's confrontation is handled is likely to decide what happens there and elsewhere in the future. Having put Yugoslavia outside the perimeter of our concerns when he was a candidate in 1976, Jimmy Carter must be quite clear about reversing course in 1980.

It is tempting to assume that the Russians have now bitten off more than they can chew, certainly more than they can digest. Jimmy Carter's vulgar counterpoint of Soviet atheism and Afghani religious piety is just another indication of the hope abroad in the country that the Islamic revival will now fix its huge capacity for animus on Moscow instead of us. This is wishful thinking. The Russians have quite successfully pacified their own Moslems, and they remain adept at mobilizing Moslem discontent against others, as in Yugoslavia, where Cominformists support Islamic separatists and other forms of irridenta against the central government. Despite the occupation and the free bombing zones in Afghanistan, moreover, not much has been heard in protest from the regimes in Syria, Iraq, and Libya, or the PLO. These revolutionary folk have no option, given their own goals, except to be mortgaged to the Soviets. Nowhere in Islam, it is important to recall, has a Soviet embassy been seized. Imagine what the Russians would have done if their diplomatic personnel had been taken hostage in Tehran as a Moslem retaliation for the crushing of Afghanistan.

That is not a reason for us to behave like the Soviet Union. But 72 days after the taking of our embassy, we have not yet dared do what we should have done within 72 hours. With the captives held and bound in Iran, we are still dancing attendance on Kurt Waldheim, who has made a specialty of placating terrorists and tyrants. Our "great victory" in the Security Council late last month turns out to be not a victory at all.

The more we engage in the kind of apologetics expected by the likes of Waldheim, and those third worlders still stirred by the humiliations of the US, the less we will be able to act appropriately in our quite different, but momentarily intertwined, struggles with Iran and the Soviet Union. President Carter has reaped a windfall of popularity from America's troubles. But he will have to do more than he has done to earn it and keep it. It's a sad commentary, but nothing yet said by Ted Kennedy, still his chief Democratic opponent, or by the leading Republicans, suggests right now that the country would be better off with one of them in the Oval Office.

White House Watch

Triggers

Last August 16, six days before attorneys for two evaders of federal taxes tried to improve the prospects for their clients by telling the Department of Justice that Hamilton Jordan, the chief of the President's White House staff, had asked for and been given and snorted cocaine at Studio 54, a snooty and raunchy joint run by the evaders in New York City, Benjamin Civiletti of Baltimore succeeded Griffin Bell of Atlanta as attorney general of the United States. On November 19 Civiletti asked a division of the US Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia to appoint a special prosecutor to pursue the charge that Jordan had possessed cocaine—use as such is not a federal offense—at Studio 54. On November 29 the court division appointed Arthur Christy, a distinguished Brooklyn attorney and former federal prosecutor, "to investigate this matter and any other related or relevant allegation of a violation . . . by Hamilton Jordan." Civiletti considered that Chapter 39, the special prosecutor section of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, forbade him to tell anybody outside the department, including his late superior, Griffin Bell, that he, Civiletti, had concluded that in the

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circumstances the statute compelled him to request the appointment of a special prosecutor.

Civiletti as deputy attorney general and Bell as attorney general usually had agreed on the close questions raised by the ethics act and its special prosecutor chapter. Bell and Civiletti had stood together against department lawyers who argued that the act granted less discretion to the attorney general in asking or not asking for a special prosecutor than Bell and Civiletti thought it allowed. Bell twice refused to request the appointment of a special prosecutor in publicized cases and Civiletti agreed with him. Strict constructionists in the department thought the law required special prosecutors in these cases. In his report to the court requesting appointment of a special prosecutor in the Jordan case, Civiletti footnoted three instances in which, in his opinion, investigation had not justified requests for a special prosecutor. He has said that in several other instances, two of them involving persons of Hamilton Jordan's stature and rank, investigation of complaints showed them to be frivolous and unfounded, and therefore not requiring requests for special prosecutors.

With all this in mind, Civiletti assumed as of January 3 that Griffin Bell would have called for a special prosecutor if he'd been the attorney general when the time came for the decision in the Jordan case. Although Bell was out of office and back with his Atlanta law firm in November, he'd kept in touch with the preliminary Jordan investigation. An Atlanta friend remarked to Bell that he was lucky. If he'd been attorney general in November, the friend surmised, Bell would have told the court that no special prosecutor and further investigation were necessary and, in consequence, he and the President would have been accused of protecting their friend, servitor, and fellow Georgian, Hamilton Jordan. Bell didn't disagree. He refuses to second-guess his protégé and successor, Civiletti. But Bell is known to feel that Civiletti let the Studio 54 lawyers drive him with their publicized charges against Jordan to request a special prosecutor when none was justified or necessary.

The lawyers in question, notably Roy Cohn in New York and Mitchell Rogovin in Washington, did themselves and their clients no good, anyhow. Civiletti and the US prosecutor of the tax evasion cases in New York refused to bargain down the federal charges from felonies to misdemeanors. Rogovin, the chief peddler of the cocaine charge against Jordan, told me that he hoped at one point that a special prosecutor might take over the tax cases and be more open to bargaining than the department and the US attorney in New York were. The hope was illusory. Two owners of Studio 54 pleaded guilty to charges of individual and corporate tax evasion and are scheduled to be sentenced January 18. Each of them could get 10 years in prison. A punk who was said by one of the owners to have supplied Jordan with two snorts of cocaine at Studio 54 on a June

drawing by Mike Peters

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evening in 1978 has pleaded guilty to selling illicit drugs. He's said on TV that he was told by somebody but doesn't know that the snorter was Jordan.

In this journal's issues of last September 29 and October 20, I examined the anomalies of the ethics act's special prosecutor chapter and, in discreditable succession, declared my doubt of and my belief in Hamilton Jordan's assertion that he's never used cocaine. I stand by the belief in Jordan. I also stand by my belief that the special prosecutor chapter of the ethics act is abominably drafted and should be amended or repealed. As Bell proved and Civiletti argues, the act does not altogether deprive the attorney general of discretion in deciding whether proffered information or formal allegation of wrongdoing by senior federal officials requires preliminary investigation and perhaps the appointment of special prosecutors. Once accusatory information or allegations are publicized, however—and a published report without formal allegation may trigger the act—it becomes extremely difficult for an attorney general to refuse to ask the court to appoint a special prosecutor. Civiletti, for instance, told the court that preliminary investigation established no cause whatever for further inquiry or prosecution in three allegations of use of cocaine by Hamilton Jordan and, as the proved facts then stood, no cause for prosecution in the Studio 54 case. Yet, debarred as Civiletti considered himself to be from taking testimony under oath from key witnesses, he could not conclude beyond doubt that Jordan had not "possessed" cocaine in violation of federal law at Studio 54. So he asked the court to appoint a special prosecutor who under the law could swear witnesses, take them before grand juries, and use other powers of "compulsory process."

Arthur Christy, the special prosecutor, says he considers that he is authorized by the court to investigate only the allegation that Hamilton Jordan used (and therefore "possessed") cocaine "in the southern district of New York"—meaning practically, at Studio 54. Christy confused things a bit by saying at a press conference that there are no geographical limits on his jurisdiction, leading some journalists to suppose that he might also get into allegations that Jordan had used ("possessed") cocaine in Los Angeles. It's understood at the Justice Department that Christy meant that he and his small staff of lawyers and investigators, based in New York, may take testimony from anybody anywhere so long as it's connected with the Studio 54 affair and Jordan behavior that may bear upon it. At Civiletti's request, the court also authorized Christy to look into the possibility that persons unnamed—woe here to the Studio 54 owners and their lawyers—may have misinformed and tried to mislead the Justice Department. Christy and Civiletti would decide in consultation whether the special prosecutor or the attorney general should move against any such persons. Civiletti is busting to.

On behalf of William W. Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists, and six other supporters of Edward Kennedy, Washington lawyer Joseph L. Rauh Jr. and two other attorneys have asked US District Judge June Green in Washington to halt the "misuse of federal power and federal funds to purchase the renomination of Jimmy Carter." Seven Carter assistants, seven Cabinet members, and the Carter-Mondale campaign committee are named defendants. Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter are not named defendants—because, Joe Rauh says, suits against presidents are never taken seriously. The initial complaint doesn't mention federal laws and allege violations of same. A supplementary filing does. Fact is, incumbent presidents and supporting federal officials can't campaign for renomination and reelection without violating or at best stretching a swatch of federal laws. Attorney General Civiletti is deciding at this writing whether the facts cited in the Kennedy suit compel him to consider a request for a special prosecutor. Carter lawyers at the White House and with the campaign committee are worried. Recommended reading for them is Jimmy Carter's speech to the American Bar Association in 1976, calling for a law authorizing the appointment of special prosecutors.

John Osborne

The embargo shows who's serious about getting tough.

Grain of Truth

Republicans, we all know, are made of pretty tough fiber. For months now all of the GOP presidential contenders (except Illinois congressman John Anderson) have been hammering away at President Carter for what John Connally calls a policy of "appeasement" in world affairs. So it would have been reasonable to expect at least some grudging praise from the Republicans for Carter's decision on January 4 to clamp an embargo on shipments of grain and high-technology equipment to the Soviet Union, a measure intended to penalize the Russians for their Christmas invasion of Afghanistan.

Each of the GOP candidates had a chance to speak his mind at a debate the very next night in Des Moines; each (again, except Anderson) came out foursquare for getting tough with the Soviets and against depriving them of 17 million tons of American wheat and corn. Ronald Reagan skipped the debate, but later endorsed the general sentiment. Said Connally, the very soul of foreign policy machismo: "I don't think the Iowa farmers should pay the price for the failure of the Carter foreign policy." Dole: "He devastated the American farmer; he made the farmer the scapegoat for

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Will there ever be another TV series as worthwhile as Sesame Street?

Yes, thank goodness. It starts Monday, January 14.

Joan Ganz Cooney and her Children's Television Workshop saw a way 10 years ago to teach kids, using the medium kids love best. The happy result was *Sesame Street*.

Does anyone have to be told *Sesame Street* went on to become one of the most successful TV shows ever?

Now Joan Cooney and the Workshop are ready with a new series every bit as significant as *Sesame Street*. It's called *3-2-1 Contact*. It will be on PBS stations Mondays through Fridays.

3-2-1 Contact is about science. If you just said *ugh*, maybe it's because you grew up without a show like this, which is a pity. And a national problem.

Thousands of bright and inquisitive youngsters start their school years with a natural interest in the sciences. But they get turned off before they ever reach junior high school. Thousands of scientists and engineers are lost to America in the process. *3-2-1 Contact* will keep curiosity alive in 8-to 12-year olds by bringing the same excitement to science and technology that *Sesame Street* brought to the child's first recognition of letters and numbers.

The National Science Foundation, The U.S. Department of Education, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting all contributed sizable sums to help put *3-2-1 Contact* on the air.

So did we.

Our motives are simple. We invest more than a million-and-a-half dollars a day in scientific research and development to keep our Otis elevators, Pratt & Whitney Aircraft jet engines, Carrier air conditioners, Sikorsky helicopters and other high-technology products the best in their fields—and to create new and still better products. The United Technologies $2 million grant for this show is part of our investment in the future. We're pleased to make it.

And we're happy to invite you and your 8-to 12-year old friends to watch *3-2-1 Contact*. See your local TV listings for the broadcast schedule.

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past failures in foreign policy; didn't hurt the Russians a bit." Bush: "I disapprove of the president's action." Crane: "The farmer has been made a scapegoat again of the consistent foreign policy failures of this administration." And Baker: "The only people who will be injured will be the American agricultural community." Baker added that the embargo was "very similar to the situation in Cambodia," a particularly repugnant analogy, and particularly obtuse since the American grain boycott of Russia will cause no starvation, whereas the Russians themselves share responsibility for the widespread starvation in Cambodia. Only Anderson endorsed the embargo, noting pointedly that "it is passing strange that those who are critical of our foreign policy as being deficient on the grounds that is weak . . . are unwilling to accept any measure of sacrifice."

As it turned out, the overeager Republican candidates were more solicitous of the interests of farmers than the farmers themselves were. The conservative American Farm Bureau Federation actually endorsed the embargo at its annual convention last week, and the more liberal National Farmers Union said it would not criticize the decision as long as the administration took action to help farmers who might be hurt.

None of the Republicans in the Iowa debate backed off from his insistence on getting tough with the Russians. Their recommendations in this respect ranged from Connally's suggestion that the US establish air bases in the Sinai to Baker's bold proposal that we "state once again that America is strong enough to protect our vital interests." The important thing, all but Anderson agreed, was to ensure that no Iowa farmer would have to make the slightest sacrifice.

Both of Carter's Democratic rivals also criticized the embargo. Jerry Brown called the president "weak" and "naive," and Edward Kennedy, sounding as if he had the same speechwriter as the Republicans, complained that "the American farmer will pay the price for an ineffective foreign policy." Both Brown and Kennedy, like the Republicans, insisted that they too wanted to get tough with the Russians—but not quite this way.

Apparently it is too much to expect these candidates to risk offending the farmers of Iowa only two weeks before that state holds its presidential caucuses. The Republicans in particular remember the hail of criticism that fell on President Ford when he imposed a brief grain embargo in 1975 (though Ford's purpose was simply to hold down grain prices). It plainly made no difference to anyone that Carter promised measures to protect grain farmers against a collapse in prices. Three days after the president's televised speech, the White House announced that it would buy 14.5 million tons of grain that would have gone to the Soviet Union. The Agriculture Department will buy the grain from exporting concerns that had already contracted to ship it to the Soviets, and will pay the dealers whatever they paid for it. This purchase should serve the immediate purpose of minimizing the damage to these exporters and the broader aim of preventing a sharp fall in grain prices that would mean disaster for many farmers. The next day the Agriculture Department also raised the price support level from $2.35 to $2.50 per bushel for wheat and from two dollars to $2.10 for corn, and raised the price at which farmers can take their grain out of government storage from $3.29 to $3.75 for wheat and from $2.50 to $3.05 for corn. The first measure in effect will raise the minimum price a farmer can receive; the second will hold up the prices by keeping more grain off the market. USDA also said it might make special payments to farmers for reducing production of grain already planted, either by plowing it up or by allowing livestock to graze on it. The White House made much of its plan to use some of the grain to produce gasohol, but right now there is too little production capacity to permit a significant increase.

Cutting off grain shipments may not be as emotionally satisfying as explicit military measures, but it has a couple of advantages. First, it is less dangerous. Second, it should achieve the purpose of making the invasion of Afghanistan more costly than the Soviets anticipated. Military measures short of actual intervention (which no leading candidate urges), however ferocious sounding, impose no actual cost on the Soviet Union. Canceling grain sales does. The Soviet Union badly needs American wheat and feed grains. Last year it bought nearly 16 million metric tons of grain, about 10 percent of total US production. After a bad harvest at home, it had contracted to buy 25 million tons this year. Carter's embargo means the Russians will be allowed to buy only the eight million tons guaranteed in the current US-Soviet trade agreement (five million of which already have been shipped), leaving Soviet leaders 17 million tons short of what they had planned.

This grain is essential to the Soviet government's goal of increasing meat production and consumption, a goal of no small importance. Most of the grain bought by the Russians is fed to cattle, hogs, and chickens; only a small portion of the wheat is used to make bread. Without adequate supplies of feedgrains, the Soviets will have to reduce the size of their livestock herds, which would temporarily increase meat supplies but in the long run would reduce them. The embargo will not force the Russians into an immediate decision about whether to slaughter a substantial portion of their

Coming:

What's New In Murders.

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herds, since they can do at least two things to compensate for the loss. They can draw on their grain reserves, whose exact volume is a secret. Or they can use inferior types of feed, which will keep livestock alive, though they will weigh less.

In the long run, though—and the embargo will have to remain in place for at least several months to have a real effect—the Soviets have no way of preventing the damage that the loss of American grain will cause. One question raised by some of the president's rivals was whether or not the White House had gotten assurances from other grain-exporting nations (principally Canada, Australia, and Argentina) that they would not rush to fill the void. The administration insisted that it had gotten such assurances. But in fact none of these countries would be able to increase its shipments to the Soviet Union by any appreciable amount this year anyway. Australia and Argentina already have sold their entire crops, and Canada is constrained from increasing its exports by inadequate transportation facilities. The Common Market countries, particularly France, have some reserves that could fill part of the gap, but not enough to make much of a difference. (Typically, France was the only Western ally to raise doubts about the president's decision.) We should discourage other grain exporters from increasing sales to the Soviet Union next year, but only the US really has the production capacity to fill the growing Russian appetite. Doing without American grain means doing without.

Stephen Chapman

Waiting for the fog to lift.

Iowa Corn

Des Moines

The crises in Iran and Afghanistan have cast a thick fog over the Democratic presidential campaign. It's impossible for reporters mobbing Iowa in advance of the January 21 caucuses to see what impact the crises are having on party members who might turn out for President Carter or Edward M. Kennedy in the first test of the 1980 race. The crises seem to have fogged the minds of Iowa Democrats themselves, rendering them unable to say what they will do on the night of the 21st. But most of all, the crises have utterly befuddled the Kennedy campaign, which is flying in the dark, uncertain where it is going and deeply afraid it might crash in a cornfield. President Carter may not know where he is heading in actually handling the crises, but he has not been in Iowa groping around in the gloom. While the Kennedy campaign is praying that sometime, somehow the fog will lift, Carter seems to have the advantage of flying above it all—and also of having the latest and best satellite weather photographs that the Federal Treasury can buy.

Caucus results are hard to predict in the best of times. Polls can provide a reasonable basis for forecasting how a primary election will come out, but they do not tell much about caucuses. Instead of dropping by a familiar precinct polling place for a few minutes and casting a secret ballot, as in a primary, people who go to caucuses have to spend much of a cold evening going out to a local hall, and must declare their preferences openly before their friends, neighbors, and party officials. In 1976, only 38,500 of Iowa's 500,000 Democrats appeared at the caucuses that gave Jimmy Carter his first boost toward the presidency. A candidate's organization and ability to motivate dedicated party activists count for far more at caucuses than do TV spots or broad popular appeal.

Anyway, the last public poll in Iowa came out in early December, deep into the Iran hostage crisis, but before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and President Carter's decision to embargo grain to the Soviet Union. It showed Kennedy and Carter running even at 40 percent each, with the remaining Democrats either undecided or favoring California's governor, Jerry Brown.

A better, but not very good, measure of who's ahead in a caucus race comes from candidates' spokesmen, who have the results of calls placed to voters from telephone banks set up at headquarters around the state. The claims of campaign spokesmen need to be heavily discounted because of their tendency to poor-mouth—to lower reporters' expectations so that, when the results are in, they will tell the country that candidate X did better than was forecast. In Iowa, Carter spokesmen are claiming that the race is tight, that Carter's grain embargo will hurt him among farmers, and that if the president can draw just one more vote than Kennedy, he will have won a victory. Kennedy's national political director, Paul Kirk, says he doesn't see how Kennedy can possibly win against all of Carter's advantages—the incumbency, a national surge of patriotism over Iran and Afghanistan, Carter's backlog of support from 1976, and an earlier start in the 1980 campaign. Kirk and Kennedy both told me last week that Carter could get nearly 50 percent of the caucus votes, that uncommitteds might be as high as 20 percent, and that Kennedy will do well to come in in the high 20s. They said that if Carter is actually in the 40s, there is a chance, once the crises in Iran and Afghanistan are over, for Kennedy to clean up among uncommitteds and Brown delegates (if there are any) and emerge with a majority of Iowa votes at the Democratic National Convention.

Kennedy and Kirk obviously are playing a bit of poor-mouth. They know that they have a first-class organization in Iowa and that the United Auto Workers and the Machinists Union are going all out for Kennedy

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in industrial sections of the state. They sense a reservoir of displeasure with Carter's overall performance as president, especially on domestic issues, and they hope that Kennedy's promise never to impose a grain embargo except in wartime will help with the farm vote. If Kennedy should actually beat Carter, they want the press to report a stunning Kennedy victory. They want a loss, if it is close, to be interpreted as a not-bad performance against all the odds.

But the Kennedy pessimism is not all poor-mouthing. There is genuine trouble in the Kennedy campaign, even talk that Kennedy might lose New Hampshire—unlikely as that seems—and have to drop out of the presidential race. With occasional exceptions, Kennedy's own performance on the stump is flat, uninspired, and uninspiring. He can be eloquent when talking about a subject he knows well and cares about—such as health care and dignity for the aged—but Iran and Afghanistan have overwhelmed the domestic themes on which he planned to campaign against Carter, and Kennedy hasn't a clue about how to deal with them.

Contrary to a *Washington Post* report last week that he has been issuing harsh attacks on Carter's foreign policy, Kennedy actually has been purposely mild. The strongest he gets is to charge that administration policy has been characterized by "drift," has "lurched from crisis to crisis," and hasn't enunciated with "a single voice." Kennedy provides no specifics for these charges, and merely says that the United States needs to act in a way to "restore the respect" of its allies and adversaries. In a statement on the Afghan crisis last Monday, Kennedy differed with Carter on the grain embargo—he said it would "hurt American farmers and taxpayers more than the Soviet aggressor"—but prescribed measures of his own which amounted to an endorsement of Carter's cutoff of trade in technology to Russia, his movement of US forces to the Indian Ocean, aid to Pakistan, and cautious cooperation with China. When a Kennedy speechwriter was asked why Kennedy didn't charge, as Jerry Brown has, that Carter was "hiding behind the hostages" and refusing to come out of Washington to campaign, the writer reacted with horror, predicting that Kennedy then would become the target of charges he was undermining national unity. Kennedy even seems afraid to be harsh on Carter about domestic issues, fearing he would be accused of engaging in *ad hominem* attacks.

Coming Next Week:
Ferdinand Mount on
the Division of Labour.

In part, Kennedy's caution is the result of the battering he suffered last month after criticizing the shah of Iran. But there is a deeper problem. Kennedy does not seem to know whether to be a hawk or a dove in foreign policy. He senses that the country is in a chauvinistic mood, so he drops references into his speeches about how US embassies are burning, Americans are being taken hostage, and there are Cuban troops in Africa and Russian troops in Cuba and Afghanistan. He implies that these setbacks are Carter's fault and never would have occurred if he had been president. But he doesn't say how—at least not convincingly.

Kennedy seems smitten with immense intellectual confusion. He wants to play hawk to appeal to the popular mood, but this would fly against his Senate voting record, the advice he gets from his closest aides, and, probably, his own convictions. What does Kennedy think Soviet intentions are in central Asia? He does not want to "speculate" about that and would rather "respond to what the Soviets actually do." But at the same time, he criticizes Carter for not having a consistent strategy for dealing with Russians, even though a hypothesis about their intentions would seem to be a primary element of strategy. My own guess is that Kennedy thinks detente might have worked if Carter had managed it better; but in the Iran-Afghanistan climate, he is afraid to say so.

Kennedy's hope is that Iran and Afghanistan will blow over soon, that the campaign will return to domestic issues, and that he can make hay against Carter on inflation, energy, and social questions. But while the crises are on, Carter seems immune from attack—Kennedy is barred from giving the crowds fire and fun. Without that, Democrats who come to hear him out of curiosity do not leave motivated to hike through the snow to a caucus to vote for him.

So the burden of the Kennedy campaign is being borne excessively by his organization, his union friends, and his phone banks. But Carter, too, has a well-oiled organization, friends in the Iowa Education Association, and phone banks. He also has Vice President Mondale, the first lady, and the secretary of agriculture, all of whom have been in Iowa repeatedly and will be back.

Unless there is some dramatic new development in the foreign crises, the key determinant of the Iowa caucuses is likely to be the farm community's reaction to Carter's grain embargo, which violated a promise Carter made in 1976. The administration has assured farmers it will protect them against financial losses by buying up grain that otherwise would have gone to Russia, by increasing price supports for grain, and by helping farmers borrow money for next year's equipment and seed. Notwithstanding the promises, grain prices tumbled in response to the embargo. Since most farmers were not actually selling in the immediate post-embargo period, their losses were strictly paper. Still, some of them will be unsettled and many of them

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will be mad. That's good for Kennedy. On the other side, farm prices this year have been generally good, and Carter's campaign advertising all recalls his own experience as a farmer who understands farmers' problems. Farmers tend to be patriotic folks, and Rosalynn Carter has been telling them that it's every American's patriotic duty to support the president in the Afghan crisis, which she and he are claiming is the most serious threat to peace since World War II. Will the farmers vote their pocketbooks or their patriotism? They say they're undecided, which is why there is a deep political fog over Iowa right now.

Morton Kondracke

Why the UN is so useless.

The League of Frightened Men

by Shirley Hazzard

> To act with doubleness towards a man whose own conduct was double, was so near an approach to virtue that it deserved to be called by no meaner name than diplomacy.

Something like this view of George Eliot's may have influenced Iranian leaders in their contemptuous dismissal of Kurt Waldheim last week in Tehran. There was no reason for any of the prevailing factions in Iran to negotiate with an official who had ignored the atrocities of the previous regime, and had made himself an eager instrument of the shah's policy of buying respectability through donations to overseas institutions. Year after year, as Amnesty International presented documented reports of gross violations of human rights in Iran, the United Nations secretariat—supposed custodian of rights—courted funds from the shah and, in return, helped him to furbish his image.

Returning from Tehran, an unnerved Waldheim appeared on ABC's "Issues and Answers." He indignantly denied that the United Nations had done nothing about the abuses of the shah and SAVAK. "I received hundreds and thousands of complaints, and we always dealt with them. We sent them to the—and I even spoke to the Iranians. When I was in Iran two years ago, I did raise the question, but the ther authorities said that they wouldn't discuss the matter with me." This tragic charade—referring reports of atrocities back to the offending government for consideration—is indeed standard United Nations procedure. It is augmented by the UN Commission on Human Rights, a discredited body presided over for a time by Princess Ashraf, the sister of the shah.

Princess Ashraf recently placed a full-page ad in some American newspapers to remind Waldheim about his past appreciation of her brother's favors. Her tactless *aide-memoire* included a photograph of a jubilant Waldheim clutching the princess with one hand and a large Pahlavi check with the other. It quoted rhapsodic tributes to the humanitarian ideals of the Pahlavis from Waldheim and his assistant, Mrs. Helvi Sipila. Princess Ashraf chaired a variety of UN rights bodies in the 1970s, and was given a leading role in the chaotic International Women's Conference held at Mexico City in 1975 and made possible by Iranian munificence. Until events overtook them, there were plans for a United Nations training institute for women in Iran, with a proposed Iranian budget of one million dollars. Despite this seeming preoccupation with women's rights, Kurt Waldheim demonstrates massive discrimination against women within his own staff. He showed no support for the Iranian women who bravely marched in thousands last year in Tehran to protest repression by the ayatollah.

During the shah's ascendancy, Waldheim administered an annual award of $50,000, known as the Pahlavi Prize, paid for by guess-who and conferred for environmental services. The first recipient was Waldheim's own colleague, Maurice Strong, who was leaving the United Nations Environment Program after a short and turbulent career.

When Kurt Waldheim set foot in Iran on New Year's Day, his first utterance was characteristically negative: "You cannot expect from such a first visit to solve immediately all problems. That is not being realistic." Much more unrealistic was his supposition that the world observed the capers of United Nations officials with any residual optimism. Last October, the *Guardian*

Shirley Hazzard, the novelist, worked 10 years at the United Nations, and is the author of *Defeat of an Ideal* (Atlantic Monthly Press), a documented study of the UN.

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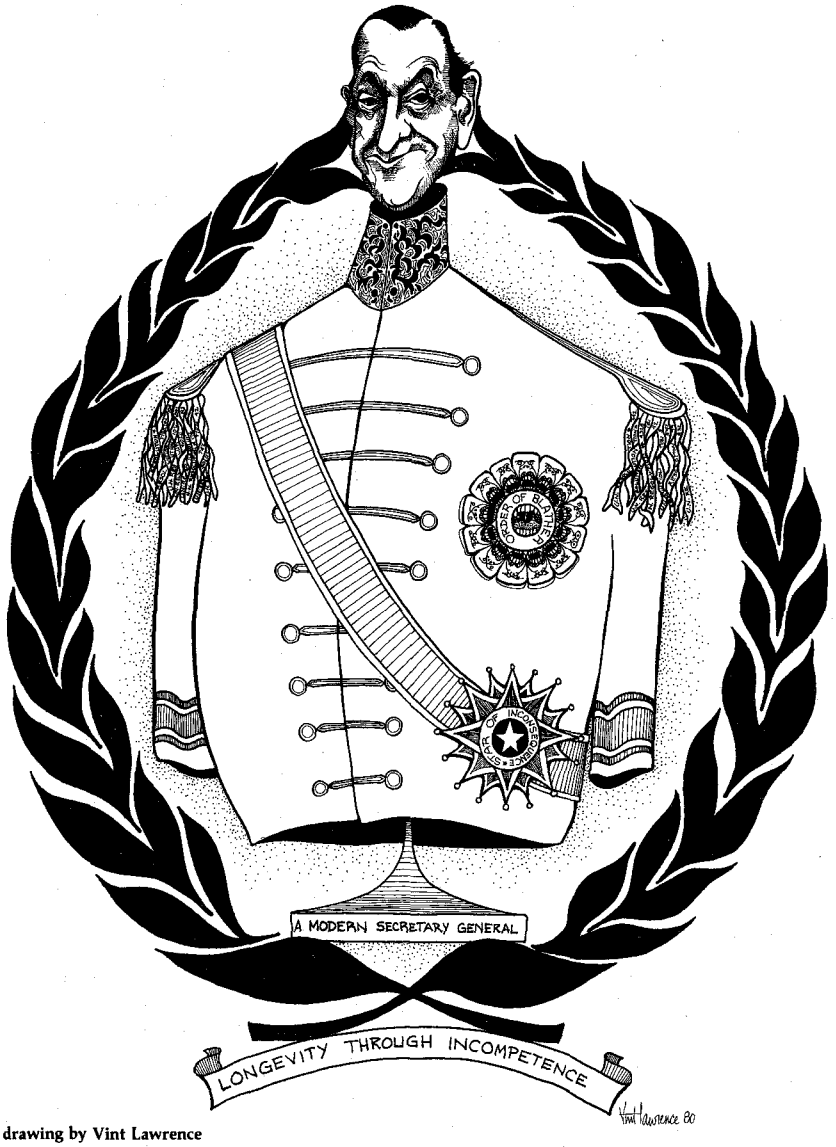

drawing by Vint Lawrence

of London discussed Waldheim's role (nonexistent) in ending the Cambodia tragedy: "As so often when anything important is taking place in the world, the UN itself is silent. It is aided, abetted and guided in that silence by the inactivity of the Secretary-General himself. . . . Why does not Kurt Waldheim make a strenuous effort to overcome the deadly punctilio in which his office has taken refuge?"

In fact, the deadly punctilio is organic. The method for selecting secretariat leaders is the only UN official process that can be described as finely honed. United Nations senior officers are systematically chosen for their very lack of moral courage and independent mind. The office of secretary general is the pinnacle on which this negative capability culminates. In Waldheim, the position has found its consummate expression.

Kurt Waldheim was born in Austria in 1918. He came to manhood, as it were, with the Anschluss, dutifully following the normal path by taking part in the Nazi youth movement and serving in Hitler's army in various campaigns including the Eastern Front. To do otherwise would have been to exhibit a rare heroism—and, incidentally, to disqualify himself, had he survived, for the future position of United Nations secretary general. Unflawed by any such aberration, Waldheim moved on through the Austrian diplomatic service and foreign ministry into the political life of his country, apparently intent on gaining high office. In 1971, shortly before his installation as UN secretary general, he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Austrian presidency. His UN appointment was sought, and possibly attained, through intensive lobbying.

When Waldheim's predecessor, the Burmese U Thant, retired as secretary general, it was—as was remarked of Asquith's fall from power—as if a pin had dropped. Waldheim inherited from Thant a position steeped in self-righteous timidity and administrative incapacity. The first UN secretary general, Trygve Lie—whose background as a labor lawyer and member of Norway's wartime government-in-exile might have promised better—had demolished any germ of a true international civil service by conspiring to violate the charter before its ink was dry. In the UN's infancy, Lie contracted a secret agreement with the United States government whereby Washington was given control over United Nations administrative procedures. The US used this control to dominate the secretariat for 20 years, with incalculable adverse effect on United Nations potential, and in the end with particularly negative results for the United States.

The most powerful member of the United Nations secretariat in the organization's formative years was not Trygve Lie, but the administrative chief, Byron Price, an American of destructive tendencies who was in effect Washington's chief covert agent at UN headquarters. During the McCarthy years, the secretariat administration expelled, repelled, persecuted, intimidated, or alienated virtually every free-thinking employee in its senior and intermediate grades. This left a dross from which the present administrative edifice was formed. The danger to be avoided, in the view of member governments, was the possibility that a truly international civil service might be created, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, to represent the moral principles that governments were likely to ignore. The organization was convulsed over this issue for six years. Lie's legal officer, an American, committed suicide; and Lie himself, along with Byron Price, eventually resigned—but not before they had installed a branch of the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation at UN headquarters, on international territory, for the purpose of "screening" the staff. The FBI office was retained by Dag Hammarskjöld until it had completed its "task." No senior UN official was heard to object.

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Despite its systematic exclusion of persons of character from the secretariat, and its rejection of candidates with even a mild show of unorthodoxy in their backgrounds, the United Nations administration has knowingly recruited, and retained in prolonged employment at senior grades, agents of the KGB and CIA—and, presumably, of every other national secret police on earth. That is entirely consistent with a UN precept that the only unforgivable offense a senior official can commit is to lose the endorsement of the relevant member government—not necessarily his own. When the double agent Shevchenko defected to the United States last year from his high UN post, it was announced that even though he had violated every contractual obligation, his UN pension would be paid. The former head of the United Nations mission in Cyprus, Prince Alfred zur Lippe-Weissenfeld, who resigned last September after repeated complaints from the government of Cyprus about his massive thefts of Cypriot antiquities, also will receive his UN annuity.

Waldheim's own past presented no obstacle to his United Nations appointment. When the United Nations was founded, former members of fascist organizations in the belligerent states were declared ineligible for UN service. But this prohibition was rescinded quietly in 1952, at the very time when rigorous provisions were introduced against infusions of nonconformity. To have embraced a status quo, fascist or otherwise, apparently connoted the desired team mentality. What the United Nations abhorred was individual distinction. This view follows the precedent set in the 1930s by the League of Nations, whose officials declined to recognize the plight of German and Austrian Jews.

The field of human rights is where the United Nations secretariat had, and cast away, its supreme opportunity. In the intensifying violence of the last three decades, United Nations bodies of human rights and the leaders of the UN secretariat have remained virtually silent: about American ravages in Asia, and about Pol Pot; about genocide in Biafra and Indonesia, starvation in Ethiopia, torture in Greece, Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, the Philippines, and Uganda; about punitive mutilation in Saudi Arabia, and about the vast prison network of the Soviet Union.

Into the vacuum created by United Nations inaction on human rights has come an active humanitarianism by individuals and private agencies that has gradually formed itself into a moral force—a force of the kind that a different United Nations might have inspired and led. This is the most hopeful development of the past decade. Organizations like Amnesty International operate with voluntary contributions: they offer their workers no exorbitant salaries or inane revels, and no delusions of self-importance. Nevertheless, they mobilize inestimable resources of human fellowship and proper indignation, and have assumed the task that the United Nations, with its colossal funds and massive bureaucracy, would not attempt. Only since the human rights movement burgeoned into a force not to be ignored has the United Nations made any effort to overcome its own paralysis in this area. Even so, Amnesty International has received no action on any of the thousands of documented cases it has submitted to the United Nations over many years.

In his Nobel address, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn denounced the United Nations as a place where individuals have no voice or right of appeal:

> It is not a United Nations organization but a United Governments organization . . . which has cravenly set itself against investigating private grievances—the groans, cries and entreaties of single, simple individuals . . . and abandoned ordinary persons to the mercy of regimes not of their choosing.

Solzhenitsyn cannot address the United Nations. Terrorists bearing arms can address UN assemblies, but not the moral heroes and martyrs of our violent age. The only notable recognition of his existence that Solzhenitsyn has received from the United Nations was a clandestine attempt by Waldheim and his associates, at the Soviets' behest, to suppress his works in commercial bookshops on United Nations territory. Meanwhile in Moscow, in September 1977, Waldheim presented Leonid Brezhnev with the United Nations peace medal, "in recognition of his considerable and fruitful activities in favor of universal peace and people's security."

Each December a handful of Soviet citizens demonstrate to commemorate the promulgation of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They are inevitably and invariably arrested by the Soviet police within moments of their appearance. No UN medals have been conferred on them, nor has a United Nations official ever publicly raised a voice on their behalf.

The UN secretariat is a disordered and hypertrophic institution whose continuance, as a United Nations official recently remarked, "defies the laws of logic and gravity." This is reflected in the quality of all United Nations services, most tragically in the conception and execution of relief programs and technological aid. A systematic public inquiry into the competence of UN management and its cost effectiveness is overdue. It would be interesting to compare the true proportion of the budget spent on administrative costs in UN projects to that in private relief agencies. The United States Senate Committee on Government Operations found in 1977 that United Nations salaries and material benefits ran 50 percent to 650 percent higher than the corresponding rewards to United States civil servants.

Any effort to shed light on this pleonexia is characterized by the United Nations as a blow to world peace. Generally it arouses the only show of moral outrage at which UN circles excel. In the past year, realistic reporting on the United Nations by Morton Mintz of the *Washington Post* and a series in the same

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paper by Ronald Kessler about UN finances brought hysterical denunciation from both the United Nations and the US State Department. Charles Maynes, assistant secretary of state for international organizations, confirmed that Kessler's statistics were accurate, but told the *Post* that "an article on the overall financial situation of the UN system would be used unfairly by political critics of the United Nations." Maynes said that a story on the subject "will do tremendous damage to the United Nations. . . . The damage will be incredible. It will be devastating." And so on.

United Nations officials were not called upon to testify at the cursory congressional inquiry that followed the *Post* story because, as a congressional aide explained, "the United Nations prohibits its employees from testifying before a member country's legislative committees." As it happens, dozens of American United Nations employees did appear many years ago before the McCarran Internal Security Subcommittee, which made political sport of them and ruined their careers. Not only did the UN administration make no objection to this procedure, but it made clear that any employee who refused the summons would be dismissed.

It is hard to see how significant reform of the present United Nations system could ever be effected. In any case, a juster system, based on merit as decreed by the UN Charter, could not be introduced without scuttling the corrupt political basis of the present bureaucracy. It is among the intermediate and junior staff of the United Nations that decency has lingered, like a trace of archaic culture in a totalitarian state. The extirpations of early years silenced resistance for a generation; and the staff in general remains an extremely conditioned and intimidated group. Nevertheless, with the entry of younger people into the lower and middle grades, where appointments are not yet exclusively dictated by governments, some courage has filtered back.

The labor mediator Theodore Kheel recently has undertaken, for a nominal fee, to represent the UN staff in its struggle with the administration. Kheel says that he has never encountered anything approaching the UN administration's authoritarian attitude in 40 years of labor mediation, and compares the UN leadership to "the court of Henry VIII." Kheel says, "Waldheim would be a better international mediator if he'd eschew the role of ayatollah toward his own staff."

When Pliable, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, turned back at the Slough of Despond and found his way home, he was at first "held greatly in derision among all sorts of people." But soon he recovered confidence. In Waldheim's case, too, with his recent excursion to Iran, the hollowness of his office has been only briefly exposed. But the question of Waldheim's reelection is imminent, and the Iranian debacle—which has yet to run its course—may put an end to his United Nations career. This could provide an opportunity for the public, for the first time, to observe and criticize the appointment of his successor.

Throughout the modern world, fear has created a heightened consciousness of human rights. The rise of active human rights agencies outside the United Nations suggests the form that a future world body might take. Whether public apprehension can be engaged toward the creation of rational international instruments depends, to a large extent, on serious treatment of this theme in the world's press, where it has as yet been little explored. Having almost no realistic information on the United Nations, the public cannot frame hard questions, and takes the organization at the UN's own trivial valuation, as an innocuous captive of incompatible national demands.

What the gold rush says about the 'modern' economy.

A Cross of Paper

by William J. Quirk

The world of gold is not one for two-dollar bettors. Credit Suisse will accept less than five million dollars but the serious investor should have at least this much to start. The gold bar customarily used in international transactions weighs 400 ounces. Gold produces no return except for its own potential rise in value, and there are costs connected with holding it. Not an investment for people worried about their heating bills.

In deep vaults beneath Wall Street and the Bahnhof Strasse in Zurich, there is room after room filled with gold bars. Most of the world's gold is held under the tightest security in a few great vaults. White-haired guards, like old family retainers, preside over the

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hushed atmosphere. And practically nothing happens. Up on the surface, the ownership of the gold is transferred by an exchange of pieces of paper. But a gold bar is seldom moved. If a bar is removed from the vault it loses its certification of weight and purity, and a new assay is necessary before it can be readmitted.

The gold market is smart—and large—money betting against other smart—and large—money. The seller and buyer both have an educated opinion, based on the best advice money can buy, about why now is a good time to sell or buy. Drastic price changes are startling in such a market. Yet gold has run up from $103 in August 1976 to $600 per ounce in January 1980. In 1979 the price rose from $226 to $500, and from $400 in mid-November to over $500 on December 31.

Americans are particularly ill-equipped to understand the gold game. Between 1934 and 1975, any US citizen who sat down to play was sent directly to jail. This discouraged the development of good players. Since 1975, when it became legal again to own gold, most attention has been paid to basic trading, though lately some fancy futures deals have surfaced.

The generations raised while gold was illegal were taught firmly in Economics I that there was nothing unique about gold—it was a soft yellow metal admired by primitive peoples for its glitter. Some primitive monetary systems also were attracted to it. In sum, gold's appeal was a mixture of superstition and romanticism. The United States, however, had moved into a higher evolutionary stage. This was why, of course, we put in jail anyone caught with a five-dollar gold Indian-head coin.

Gold became an enemy of the people in the early days of the New Deal. Until then gold had been law-abiding. Indeed, it was the principal medium of finance: there were gold coins, gold certificates, and gold clauses. The usual mortgage or bond called for payment in gold coin of the "present standard of weight and fineness." From 1900 to 1933 a one-dollar gold coin was supposed to contain 25.8 grains of gold—.9 fine. In practice, of course, accounts were settled in paper money; but the gold clause, by fixing the "present" standard and the measure, assured that the lender wouldn't be paid back in money that was devalued. The Allies imposed a similar clause on German money obligations in the Versailles Treaty. The debtor, in a gold clause world, gained nothing from depreciating the currency. The cost of interest was purely that of hiring the money. A lender did not have to charge 12 to 15 percent "interest" to cover the risk that repayment would be in funny money. A loan, in short, was a loan rather than a currency speculation by a couple of amateurs.

A gold standard is an arbitrary, but completely effective, method of limiting the amount of currency in circulation. To produce a coin the government had to have 25.8 grains of gold. To produce a dollar gold certificate the government had to be ready to redeem a certificate with 25.8 grains of gold. Because all of the pieces of paper weren't likely to be redeemed at the same time, the government had some leeway—but not that much. Government could only expand the money supply by getting more gold, and the world supply of gold is practically static. On April 5, 1933, by executive order, President Roosevelt ordered all persons holding gold coins, bullion, or certificates to deliver them by May 1 to specified banks, where they would be exchanged for paper money. Gold had to go underground. What law gave the president authority to seize people's property like this? A good question. Roosevelt claimed he could do so by declaring a national emergency under the 1917 Trading with the Enemy Act, which said something about foreign currency and foreigners' currency. Until Roosevelt acted, it had occurred to no one that this law had anything to say about US money owned by US citizens. Nevertheless, the government claims that almost all of the privately held gold in the US was dutifully brought in for the paper swap.

A little later Congress joined in and declared that gold clauses in financial dealings were invalid as contrary to public policy and inconsistent with the new monetary system. The Supreme Court approved everything. The pieces were in place for the disasters of the late 1960s and 1970s. The government had seized control of the printing plant—it held the power to inflate the currency without restraint. It could monetize problems from unemployment to old age security to Vietnam to the oil gouge.

Gold had to be outlawed because paper currency could not compete with it. According to Gresham's Law, an inferior currency will drive a superior one out of circulation due to the hoarding of the latter. The law assumes, though, that the inferior currency will have some value, not that it would be worth nothing. Paper money would be refused if there were any alternative.

People who buy gold have about as much trust in government as the average anarchist. Any discretionary power will be abused, they believe. Any constitutional restraint will be evaded. The government's own ineptitude probably will drive it out of existence sooner or later. At a remarkable rate, Americans have come to adopt these views, views which a few years ago would have been considered the cynical voice of tired old Europe.

In the 1970s gold got out from under governmental price controls and criminal sanctions. From 1934 to 1971 the US government controlled the price at $35 per ounce by redeeming paper dollars presented by foreigners at that rate. The $35 an ounce standing offer limited the amount of dollars in circulation. If we printed too many, their value would decline in relation to gold, which thereby represented all other prices in a one-factor consumer price index. The price of gold would rise to, say, $36 an ounce. People would run to the Treasury and turn in 35 paper dollars for an ounce of gold. The Federal Reserve then had to bring the price down by reducing the number of dollars it printed. Gold

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was like the canary miners used as a warning signal.

In the early 1960s, de Gaulle carried off quite a bit of our gold by bringing in dollars to trade, ignoring our assurances that the dollar was good as gold. In August 1971, at the Smithsonian, President Nixon reneged on our promise: the US government would no longer redeem paper dollars with gold at any rate. John Connally was sent around the world to tell foreign governments what they could do if they didn't like it. Gold was "demonetized," as the administration put it. We embarked on a campaign (odd for the world's then largest holder of gold) to prove that gold was just another commodity. To help foster this illusion gold flows are officially treated in trade statistics as the export or import of goods. A nervous Arab decision to move $100 million of gold from a New York bank to a Canadian bank has the same seemingly beneficial effect on our balance of payments as a $100-million sale of American machines to a Canadian manufacturer.

In effect, our government did to the rest of the world in 1971 what it had done to its own citizens in 1934. But of course you couldn't put the rest of the world in jail for holding gold. So instead our government tried to convince the world that gold was trivial. What was important was the dollar, the world's reserve currency, which we would carefully manage. There is a terrible inconsistency between calling sonething trivial and putting people in jail for holding it. In 1975 our government realized this and decriminalized gold.

From 1934 to 1968 the price of gold was fixed by the US government at $35 an ounce. In 1968 the system weakened and was replaced with a two-tier system: we would deal with other governments at $35 an ounce but no longer would we sell to or buy from parties. The private market was free to set its own price, but "leakage" assured that it stayed close to the official price. In 1971 Nixon collapsed the old system and gold started its climb. It dropped sharply in 1975 and in 1976, when Jimmy Carter became president, gold was $134. The London price has been 1972, $64; 1973, $112; 1974, $166; 1975, $140; 1976, $134; 1977, $164; 1978, $226; 1979, $530; and 1980, over $600.

For the past 50 years the price of gold has been effectively pegged to the price of oil. One ounce of gold usually will buy about 15 barrels of oil. The world's oddest form of money has been in lock-step with its most critical resource. In 1970, when gold was $35 an ounce, a barrel of oil cost about $2.25. In 1971 the dollar's integrity was thrown away. After flooding the world with our paper IOU's President Nixon calmly announced that they were no longer redeemable in gold or anything else. In 1973 the Arabs got the message and used the Yom Kippur War as an excuse to quadruple the dollar price of oil. Oil was priced at eight dollars a barrel; gold went to $130 an ounce. By this ratio, gold at $500 would reflect oil at $33 a barrel. Oil at $40 a barrel would mean gold at $600. Gold's relationship to silver for 30 years has been one ounce of gold to 32½ ounces of silver. On January 3 gold hit $632 but silver reached $41; by the traditional ratio, gold would be over $1200.

Americans seem to be the slow children of international finance. At the end of World War I the Versailles Treaty required vast reparation payments by the Germans to the French and British. France and Britain owed huge war debts to the US. The trouble was Germany didn't have any money. So the US loaned the money to Germany, which paid France and Britain, which paid the US. This string of Chinese firecrackers went off in our hands the moment we stopped the new German loans. Since the 1973-74 Arab oil gouge, American bankers, led by Chase's David Rockefeller, have involved us in an even more bizarre scheme. The poor countries of the world could not pay the quadrupled oil prices. The Arabs proposed to deposit with Chase some of their oil profits if Chase would lend to the poor countries which would use the money to pay the Arabs for their oil. That has now been done to the tune of about $50 billion. The Arab loans to the American banks are short-term deposits while the American bank loans to the poor countries are long-term and probably non-collectible. When Iran asked for its deposits back there was no money and no way to get any money. President Carter's "freeze" of Iranian assets obscured the fact that there are no assets to "freeze": they have all been loaned out to countries like Zaire and Peru to pay for oil. The banks claimed they had plenty of money, if only Carter would let them pay, but suspicious gold investors drove the price up another 50 percent.

There are a lot of reasons to doubt Western leadership and currencies, but why do people turn to gold as an alternative? Why is it worth anything? Gold jewelry is pretty but not essential. Gold's industrial uses are highly limited. Gold is scarce, is practically indestructible, and glitters, but so what? The value of gold is not intrinsic but based on a commonly held idea or convention. The convention is that gold is valuable. Because of the convention, it will buy needed goods and services. The fact that there is a fixed supply of it does not give it value, but does insure that government can't overprint it. Gold is really an honest dollar—a consistent measure.

The supply of gold is practically fixed. New production is small, just a little more than consumption. The total world gold stock is 2.181 billion ounces. Of this, 1.172 billion is held by Western governments; 784 million by private parties; and 225 million by communist countries, particularly Russia. Annual new production comes to about 50 million ounces, but each year jewelry and industrial uses consume about 40 million ounces. South Africa produces 50 percent, the Russians 25 percent, with the rest scattered. The US now produces only two percent.

One good question is who owns the privately held 784 million ounces. No one who knows anything is saying. Swiss bankers don't get to be Swiss bankers by talking too much. The London gold dealers are equally

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uncommunicative. The volume of daily trading is also a secret. Five firms fix the price at N. M. Rothschild & Sons each morning and afternoon—only this "fixing" price is disclosed.

Several countries have begun producing gold coins to tap the amateur market. The South African Krugerrand, a gold piece (not a coin), contains one ounce of gold, permitting its owner to follow the price easily. Designed in the mid-1960s to tap the historical uncle-niece and aunt-nephew gold piece market, the Krugerrands now take up 27 percent of South African production. They are sold to dealers at three percent premium over the London price the day of the sale. At $600 per ounce, however, the Krugerrand has gone past all but the most affluent uncles and aunts. South Africa is trying out quarter-ounce and half-ounce pieces to keep business up.

The Russians also are trying to cash in, taking out large ads in the *New York Times*. They are selling a quarter-ounce gold coin called a chevronet. The ad assures us that "the weight and fineness are backed by the Soviet Union." The Russians think the price is right to convert some of their gold stock into dollars which can be converted into US computers. Carter's technology transfer freeze will confound this scheme.

Our own government also has been selling gold as a way of narrowing the federal budget deficit. Since May of 1978 the US has auctioned off about 14.3 million ounces at monthly sales. The gold has brought in about three billion dollars of what Carter calls revenues. The successful bidders are German and Swiss banks, which are happy to take the stuff off our hands. Treasury officer Lilse Widman explains that the point of the auctions, "simply put," is to reduce our trade deficits and "reduce gold's role in monetary affairs." Simply put, if we still had the gold the Treasury sold over the past year and a half for three billion dollars, it would be worth over seven billion dollars. In 1960 the US owned 508 million ounces; in July 1979 we owned 267 million ounces. Thus we have abandoned almost half our gold stock, most of it at $35 an ounce. It would bring about $120 billion at current prices.

The clearest message of $600-an-ounce gold is that the smart money views the dollar as terminal. For 15 years we have spread our IOUs over the world. There are more dollars outside the US than there are inside. The dollar's role as the basic international currency—75 percent of business is conducted in dollars—has permitted us to push our trade and budget deficits onto the rest of the world. One reason for the gold rise is that dollar flight doesn't have that many places to go.

In a gold standard world, problems like this cannot be deferred. If we had a $100 deficit in our trade with the Japanese, we would have to ship $100 worth of gold to them. Our money supply would be reduced, causing deflation. The Japanese money supply would be increased, causing inflation. The deflation would make our goods competitively attractive, which would bring trade back into balance.

Without the automatic check of a gold standard the Nixon and Carter administrations were able, in a remarkably short time, to turn the once awesome dollar into Monopoly money. Keynes wrote in 1919 that there is no "subtler" or "surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency." The "process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose."

Divining Soviet designs in central Asia.

What Russia Wants

by Robert Moss

The overrunning of Afghanistan did not come unannounced. As early as May last year, a report prepared for the Defense Intelligence Agency accurately assessed that there was a high probability that the Soviets would invade. Citing the intensive construction work by Soviet engineers on strategic roads running from the Russian border to the Khyber and Kojak passes—the gateways to Pakistan—the DIA report evoked Moscow's centuries-old design of hacking a corridor through Afghanistan and Pakistan to warm-water ports on the Indian Ocean.

If the DIA analysis is correct, Soviet eyes are now fixed on Gwadur and the other seaports on Pakistan's western coast, which the Pakistanis have been thoughtfully expanding. The Russians have three ways they can reach these harbors. They can send their troops on into Pakistan, invoking the right to clean out

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the sanctuaries that Afghanistan's Moslem guerrillas currently enjoy on the other side of the border. Or they can build on the secessionist stirrings among Pakistan's Pathan and Baluchi tribes, with the aim of setting up one or more mini-states that would grant them a corridor to the sea. Or they can try to overthrow the regime of General Zia ul-Haq—whose nuclear ambitions, ultra-Islamic posturing, and barbaric treatment of his opponents have isolated him from Western sympathy—and substitute a government that would be more accommodating to their designs. The return of Indira Gandhi in India will be a definite help to the Soviets in pursuing any of these tacks. In the course of her electioneering, Mrs. Gandhi promised to wrest Kashmir away from Pakistan.

Though the invasion of Afghanistan may be a step toward the fulfillment of a larger, longstanding Soviet design, the timing and the circumstances were not of Moscow's choosing. There were telltale signs of the build-up as early as the beginning of December, when US satellite surveillance revealed a partial mobilization of Soviet forces along the southern borders of the USSR (notably in Uzbekistan) and apparently related troop movements in East Germany, Bulgaria, and Hungary. (French correspondents have reported that some of the Soviet units in Afghanistan were transferred from East Germany. Maybe these are some of the troops and tanks that President Brezhnev pulled out of the GDR in his much-heralded "peace offensive.") Simultaneously, the Soviets expanded their garrisons in Kabul and at the Bagrame and Shendan airbases, and the deputy chief of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs turned up in the Afghan captial. His ostensible mission was to preside over the "modernization" of the Afghan police along Soviet lines. His real assignment was to report on which units of the Afghan security forces would carry out Soviet orders when it came to ousting President Hafizollah Amin.

Though a pro-Soviet, rigidly doctrinaire Marxist, Amin had incurred Soviet wrath by deposing his predecessor, Nur Mohammed Tarakki (himself installed by a KGB-sponsored coup in 1978) last September without securing Moscow's prior blessing. Amin's gravest offense was that he failed to crush the Moslem rebels, who had taken to butchering Russian advisers and parading their heads on pikes. There was real cause for fear that, come next spring, the rebels might be able to mount a successful campaign to dislodge the government's forces from most of the major towns. The Russians chose to pre-empt this campaign by using their tanks to install a puppet regime headed by Babrak Karmal. Karmal, an exile in Prague for 18 months before the invasion, had been groomed as the leader of an unconditionally pro-Soviet regime.

The lesson in all of this for those who befriend the Russians is rather sobering. The policy of every ruler of Kabul since the Bolshevik Revolution has been to maintain cordial relations with Moscow—a prudent course for a small nation at the back door of a great power. The first Afghan-Soviet friendship treaty was signed in 1921. In the past two years, Afghanistan has had three presidents, all Marxists, all pro-Soviet, and all, quite plainly, regarded as dispensable by Moscow. Now that Afghanistan is occupied by the Red Army, its independence is about as meaningful as that of Mongolia.

The Russians are after more in Afghanistan than a safe southern border and a bloody demonstration to the potentially restive Moslems of Soviet Central Asia that you can't take on a communist regime and get away with it. It would be a tremendous conceptual mistake to view events in Afghanistan—or Tehran, or Mecca—in isolation from the overall power equation in a region that is critical to Western economies, and where the central thrust of Soviet policy is well defined: denial to the West of guaranteed access to Mideast oil.

In pursuit of that strategic objective, the Russians have been willing to make use of any tool that falls to hand, sacrificing pro-Moscow communist loyalists, where necessary, to build on other forces that are better placed to damage Western interests. Events in Afghanistan will make it harder for the Soviets to contend that they have sympathy with resurgent Islam—although the Tass news agency latched onto Abdul Aziz Sadiq, chairman of the Afghan Council of Ulema (religious elders), and attributed to him a statement in praise of the Soviet Union that sounded as genuine as comparable utterances from KGB-run Metropolitans of the Russian Orthodox Church. But distress over the plight of their Moslem brothers in Afghanistan did not deter Khomeini's revolutionary guards from firing on demonstrators who tried to storm the Soviet embassy in Tehran. The PLO is unembarrassed, although its biggest financiers, the Saudis, are very audibly outraged (and became the first nation to boycott the Olympic games). Syria's president Assad actually chose this moment to call for closer ties with the Soviets to fend off US imperialism. But then, some might contend, the Alawites whom Assad represents are fairly heretical Moslems.

While Moscow's Afghan blitzkrieg rolls on, there is unfinished business in Iran, just over the border. Khomeini may not be the Russians' man, but the ferocity of his anti-Americanism obviously serves their interests. In the middle distance, the Soviet leadership probably has its sights set on two alternative scenarios for Iran that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The first would be a leftist coup in Tehran, in which the Tudeh party—apparently small in numbers, but with networks firmly implanted among the oil workers in Khuzestan, in some sections of the armed forces and administration, and in broadcasting and the media—would be assigned a leading role. The other option would be direct Soviet intervention, which might be triggered by US reprisals for the embassy episode, or simply by the argument used in the case of Afghanistan: that unrest in a neighboring country

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posed a threat to Russia's southern border. Contrary to much of what has been asserted in the press, the invasion of Afghanistan was not the first instance of regular Soviet army units being sent to fight in a non-European country. That honor belongs to Iran, where memories are still fresh of Stalin's occupation of Azerbaijan (from which the Russians were only evicted in 1947). The strength of hostility to Khomeini among the supporters of the rival ayatollah, Shariat-Madari, in Azerbaijan, could provide the Soviets with a pretext to move into this neighboring province once again. The Russians could appeal to a 1921 treaty with Iran—cited on several occasions over the past year by the Moscow press—that allows Russia the right "to take the necessary military action for self-defense" in the event that "third parties" try to use Iran as a base for anti-Soviet actions, or the borders of the Soviet Union are threatened. But just for now, with the sting of the Afghan invasion still fresh, Moscow is unlikely to prod America's patience that far.

Remarkably little has appeared in print about the identity and organization of the occupiers of the American embassy. They are routinely described as "students." Indeed, you could be excused for thinking, on the basis of much of the coverage, that Iran's population is wholly composed of students and ayatollahs. The committee to which the "student" occupiers belong calls itself the *Shora*. The *Shora* has six subcommittees. The two that are most secretive are in charge of security and external affairs. Western intelligence sources are now convinced that both include members of the pro-Soviet Tudeh party and members of the PLO. A PLO presence is not altogether surprising. Moscow-trained PLO specialists are advising a new revolutionary secret police group in Iran, while a 200-strong contingent of Iranian "volunteers" is deployed in southern Lebanon to serve as auxiliaries in the Palestinian assault on Christian bases. Some intelligence sources even maintain, on the basis of photographic analysis, that Palestinians are among the squads of revolutionary guards who have been executing rebels in Iranian Kurdistan.

The intelligent way for Khomeini's people to end the embassy occupation—and to let some of the steam out of American reactions—is to carry out the plan to present the hostages as witnesses at an international hearing into alleged US crimes in Iran. This would appeal mightily to the self-flagellation lobby in the United States. In Poland back in 1949, the BEZPIECKA, the secret police, arrested several French diplomats on espionage charges. A few months later, most of them trooped contritely to the dock to issue "confessions" and beg for the punishment they deserved. This caused a bit of embarrassment back in Paris. But the French, being hard-headed in such affairs, had taken appropriate precautions by locking up a comparable number of Polish diplomats. In the end, an exchange of prisoners was agreed upon. Since the Carter administration doesn't have any Iranian diplomats to trade, the outcome of a show trial seems to depend rather heavily on what suggestions Khomeini receives from Allah on the day in question. But if the shrewd men in Tehran win the internal debate, the hostages—with the possible exception of a few unfortunate CIA men—will eventually be turned free. This would inflict more humiliation on America without offering a sufficient pretext for serious punitive action.

On the Arab side of the Gulf, the emirs no longer lie easy in their beds. Aden has been converted into a huge land-based aircraft carrier, a platform for Soviet subversion—and, potentially, military intervention—throughout the Arabian peninsula. The Saudis have been striving assiduously, but unsuccessfully, to hush up what really happened during the Mecca uprising. Of the 500-odd men who joined the attack on the Grand Mosque, according to West European intelligence sources, 70 to 80 had been trained under Cuban and Soviet supervision at a camp at Lahej, 40 miles from Aden, which has also been used for instructing recruits of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. During the assault, in which Yemenis, Egyptians, Palestinians, and Kuwaitis took part, the South Yemeni army was mobilized along the Saudi border, together with its Soviet bloc advisers, apparently poised to intervene on the pretext of "defending the holy places," if the revolt showed signs of success. The rebels were equipped with a mixture of weapons—including old British rifles—to camouflage Soviet involvement, but large caches of modern Soviet-made arms were set up inside the South Yemeni border, ready for use if the moment presented itself. The whole exercise, which was supposed to include risings in Medina, Taif, and elsewhere, was supervised by a special Soviet command team.

Dangers can also be opportunities. By showing their hand so nakedly in Afghanistan, the Soviets may have created a mood of international outrage and suspicion that will not be dissipated for a long time, leading to radical and lasting changes of policy by the countries whose interests—or very survival—is in jeopardy. The Russians will be operating in a more hostile environment in the Mideast than before. Despite all the problems, the entente between Israel and Egypt is likely to be strengthened by the latest trend of events, and both countries—providing a solid base for Western efforts to contain Soviet expansionism in the Mideast—should be able to count on better friends than before.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Innocents

Angi Vera is a Hungarian film about a young woman named Vera Angi—the order of names is, as you doubtless know, the reverse of English so the effect of the title in Hungarian is not quasi bureaucratic, like *Lacombe Lucien*, it's simply normal. Simplicities and normalities are the theme of this succinct, memorable film. Made in a communist country, it nonetheless examines the way that a totalitarian environment can shape the ethics of a growing person. If there is such a thing as the grace with which we are born (saving only original sin), then this is a story of the corruption of that grace, or at least its re-definition. The device under which such a film can be made is a familiar one in communist countries: the story is set in the past under a superseded regime. "How bad things were back there in 1948," this picture can seem to say, "under the cult of personality." There are two reasons for making historical works: one is to show how much things have changed, the other is to show how much they haven't. Hungarian and other viewers can decide for themselves which was the reason here.

The director is Pál Gábor who was born in 1932—thus only 16 in the time of *Angi Vera*—who made his first feature in 1968. I've seen one previous film of Gábor's, *Horizon* (1971), which was shown in a *New Directors/New Films* series at the Museum of Modern Art, and I remember one moment vividly. The subject was adolescent disaffection. The scene is the manager's office in the factory where the 17-year-old protagonist has been summoned on charges of laxity. The manager, a middle-aged veteran of war and revolution, tells the slouching boy that a lot of people died to give him his opportunities. The boy shrugs and says something like "Who asked them to?" The manager can't help slamming the boy alongside the face and knocking him to the floor, realizing even as he does it that his action is counterproductive and the situation tragic.

Inquiry into moral status in the new society is thus not a new theme in Gábor. The screenplay of *Angi Vera*, adapted by Gábor from a novel by Endre Vészi, begins with a statement by Vera at a meeting and ends, virtually, with another statement by her at a later meeting. In the first meeting she is a nurse's aide—a scrubber—in a hospital. Unlike the cautious co-workers at this political assembly, she rises to voice objections to some hospital conditions when the local party leader asks for comments. Her frankness pleases the leadership, and she is sent to a political re-education center for training and for better employment. In that re-education, her independence is subtly transmuted into fealty. Her action in the meeting at the end *seems* the same sort of honesty as her action at the beginning: that, precisely, is the great corruption.

The shape of the film is perfect, which is to say that it does what it has to do without waste or wobble; and what it has to do is to touch profundity through concise plot motions. The characters are sharp and immediate: the ex-miner who drinks too much because of the contrast between what he fought for and what his future holds; the political teacher, an indoctrinated but guileless young man, who falls under Vera's well-meaning axe; a healthy, stubborn woman trying to advance without losing herself; an older woman whose proselytizing of Vera has some suggestion of a madam recruiting a girlie. Gábor's direction matches the script in taciturnity, yet the texture has the symbiosis that is often visible in films from Eastern Europe, the persistence of the older culture in the new order. The café to which these Marxists resort is, in look and in its life, pure Franz Josef.

I have only two substantive criticisms. A number of interior scenes are shot, by Lajos Koltai, with a kind of burnt umber overlay that makes a sentimental/nostalgic atmosphere. I couldn't see why. Second, the casting of Vera. She is played by the doe-eyed Veronika Papp who never does anything overtly false but never seems what she is said to be. We are told of the horrors that Vera and her mother underwent before they arrived in the hospital where the mother died and Vera was given work. It's hard to believe it of the delicate Papp. A sturdier girl, more peasant than displaced university student—a Hungarian Eva Mattes—would have given more presence to the character and more poignancy to the way she is used. Still, *Angi Vera* is a small barb of a picture that brings after it a long thread of truth.

Being There is one of Jerzy Kosinski's lesser novels, and with the author's own screenplay, it has been made into a tedious film. As in his book, Kosinski plants the name of Krylov, the Russian fabulist, in the script, apparently so that we will see his story as latter-day Krylov. As in the novel, the attempt at status-through-association doesn't work.

Not for want of trying. The atmosphere of fable—of fabricated exemplary circumstances—is set at the

Films Worth Seeing

The Electric Horseman. Robert Redford, nature's nobleman, and Jane Fonda, a TV hotshot, horsing around in the Great Outdoors. The script is silly-pretentious, but the stars are pleasant company.

Kramer vs. Kramer. The superb acting of Dustin Hoffman, Justin Henry, Meryl Streep, and the whole cast elevates this mediocre script—about a fight for child custody between divorced parents—into a momentous film.

Monty Python's Life of Brian. Strings of firecracker wit about an unlikely subject—an exact contemporary of Jesus who flees the move to make him a savior.

Star Trek. The actors seem almost as transparent as the story. You can see through them to the grand special effects.

SK

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start. Chance is a middle-aged gardener in the home of a wealthy man in the middle of a Washington slum. Chance is retarded: he seems to be about five, mentally. He has lived his industrious, innocent life behind brick walls. When the wealthy man dies, Chance is forced out into the world.

Through an accident, Chance, dressed in expensive castoffs, finds himself in the home of an old immensely rich and powerful industrialist, Melvyn Douglas. Chance's placidness is taken for dignity; the literal comments that he makes in terms of gardening, which is all he knows, are taken as deep metaphoric answers to the complex questions he is asked. The president of the US comes to consult the invalid Douglas, meets the gardener, is impressed, and quotes a gardening metaphor on TV. One thing quickly locks into another, and at the end of the picture, the child-minded Chance is being talked about as a candidate for the presidency.

It doesn't convince, on its own terms. For one point, fables are usually short: the special construct has to be compact. Kosinski's novel is short, and even then it disintegrates; his film runs over two hours, and fizzles early. Second, everything around Chance is intensely real, from the medical staff and equipment in Douglas's home to the presidential entourage; and in the middle of this verism, these otherwise realistic people—including a president and a tycoon—take every burble of Chance's as sagacity. In Gogol's *Inspector General*, an initial mistake about the hero leads to enormous inflations, but the hero is not a moron and the initial mistake is made because of the stupidity of the other characters. None of that is true here.

Also Kosinski's script is monophonic: there's no kind of subplot, counterpoint or harmony, just Chance's accidental pilgrimage. And the monophony becomes monotony because the purpose is obscure. Is the story supposed to show that the TV to which Chance is addicted is a maimer of minds—his and those who perceive him? But Chance was obviously born defective: his passion for TV is clearly a result of incapacity rather than a cause of it. And the others are not shown to be TV watchers. Is the point that the high and mighty are just as gullible as anyone else? The world shows plenty of evidence of that gullibility, but it has never been exploited by innocents. Is it the progress of a Parsifal through a world of wickedness—to a somewhat mystical conclusion? But this Parsifal was made by pathology, not purity.

One partial salvation for the picture would have been wit, but only a very few moments approach it. (For instance, the CIA and the FBI squabbling about who is responsible for the "disappearance" of Chance's dossier.) Most of the film, in dialogue far from limber, plods along under the director, Hal Ashby, not a name one associates with a light touch. (*Shampoo* included.) Peter Sellers does excellently at creating a five-year-old in a 50-year-old body, but the humor has to come from others' reactions to him, not from him, and it doesn't. They play it straight and make it all not only unhumorous but unbelievable. Shirley MacLaine is Douglas's wife who is supposed to find Chance exciting; she seems only embarrassed throughout. Douglas has been hailed for his performance; all I could see was that he looked old. I hope he lives to look much older, but as against his good work in *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*, it's his age that is being applauded here, not his acting.

Battle is over.

On Soldiering

by Paul Fussell

Despite the general understanding that it is on the balance of nuclear terror that our security and happiness ultimately depend, images of more traditional means of violent coercion have recently visited the public imagination. There has been not just the gesture toward reviving the draft and the Army recruiting scandal allied with it; there has been the fantasy of an American airborne division appearing at Tehran airport and shooting its way into town. When the president deploys phrases like "American resolve" and "American honor," we can guess that he is thinking not of the doomsday machine but of a regiment of Marines plunging at high port through a distant surf. This may be an appropriate moment to consider anew the nature of soldiering, in both war and peace.

To start, here's an officer's report on a search-and-destroy mission:

> In contrast to previous days, the 24 assault search parties, which were again dispatched today, did not start their sweep . . . from one flank only but proceeded simultaneously from all sides. Since the operation did not start until 1000 hours, the remaining Vietcong apparently believed that the matter had ended yesterday. Today's search operation was therefore especially successful. But our success is also due to the fact that the noncommissioned officers and men have become accustomed to the underhanded fighting and tricks of the VC, and have acquired great skill in tracking down the innumerable bunkers.

Actually, the mission described here took place not in Vietnam in 1963 but in Poland in 1943. (In two places I have substituted "Vietcong" and "VC" for the original "Jews" and "Jews and bandits.") The author of the report is not some efficient, close-cropped 30-year-old captain from Dallas; he is a 48-year-old SS major general from Detmold. But the problems facing each are similar, and their respective solutions are scarcely to be distinguished by ethical criteria.

I have quoted from *The Stroop Report* (Pantheon Books; $10), a translation of the after-action report submitted to Himmler by Jürgen Stroop, the SS Brigadeführer assigned the unhappy mission of reducing the Warsaw ghetto in April and May, 1943. Stroop was hanged in 1951. His report, captured after the war, was first published in West Germany in 1960. It consists of Stroop's introductory summary of the whole month-long operation, 32 daily teletype reports of progress, and an album of 48 photographs. This American edition, in a translation by Sybil Milton, also contains notes on the text and an introduction by the Polish scholar Andrzej Wirth. He is, predictably, more angry than precise. When he speaks of "mass-criminality," we know what he's getting at; but we should also understand that restricting a term like that to the behavior of the SS in Warsaw is to misapprehend the nature of modern soldiering. It is all mass-criminality, even if interested parties insist on significant degrees of

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difference. Generaloberst Alfred Jodl, about to be hanged at Nuremberg and anxious to assure himself that his wartime performance was different in kind from Stroop's, considered the Stroop report unique and designated its author a "dirty arrogant SS swine." "Imagine," he said, "writing a 75-page boastful report on a little murder expedition, when a major campaign fought by soldiers against a well-armed enemy takes only a few pages." But those who without self-interest study what soldiers are obliged to do will find it not so easy to distinguish a "murder expedition" from a "major campaign." Actually, Stroop's men were soldiers, and their enemy was shrewdly emplaced and well armed, as the SS casualties suggest. Stroop admits to 16 dead and 85 wounded; Polish sources claim between 400 and 700 German killed and wounded. The "cleansing" (Stroop's word) of the Warsaw ghetto was a vile business. So is any infantry attack.

Wirth makes much of Stroop's euphemisms—fortified apartments become "residential bunkers," the shipment of captured Jews to Treblinka becomes "transfer" or "resettlement"—without perceiving sufficiently that euphemism is indispensable to the military enterprise, whether conducted by the SS or anyone else. No officer has ever found himself able to submit a report like this:

> Two adolescent boys tried to sneak up on our position, and we machine-gunned them both. The brains of one came out his nose and he lived for a half hour; the other died soon too, because his leg was severed and folded back under his body. He cried for his mother for some time.

The only way to make the work bearable is to think of the men opposite as "the enemy" and individuals as targets. To speak of "wasting" or "destroying" these targets is to achieve a necessary insulation from the business. Thus "pacification centers" for the concentration camps in Vietnam, and "protective reaction strikes" for bombing raids.

The work soldiers must do is so loathsome that they find their task eased likewise by a constant verbal demeaning of the enemy. Thus Stroop's "Jews, bandits, and criminals" (sometimes "Jews, bandits, and sub-humans"), the equivalent of our own "Krauts" and "little yellow bastards" during WWII and "gooks" and "slopeheads" during Vietnam. Stroop and his men performed their stomach-turning mission by conceiving of it as a necessary *purging* of an area of Warsaw thus described by Baedeker in 1914: "Whole quarters of the town . . . are occupied by Jews, whose inattention to personal cleanliness has become proverbial." That is the context of Stroop's final cry of self-congratulation and relief, "The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw is no more!" He has come through by fancying himself a scourge of filth, a chaser of dirt like the Dutch girl on the household cleanser.

Because he is submitting a formal report to a superior, fear, an inseparable attendant of wartime soldiering, receives no treatment from Stroop. It is nicely dealt with by the French journalist and novelist Jean Lartéguy in *The Face of War: Reflections on Men and Combat* (Bobbs-Merrill; $13.95), a translation by Beth de Bilio of *La Guerre Nue*, published in France three years ago. "Weren't you ever afraid?" Lartéguy once asked his father, who now and then spoke reluctantly about World War I. "All the time," answered his father. That's from Lartéguy's first section, "War I Was Told About," where he recounts the *frisson* engendered by discovering in his family's house a locked room containing memorabilia of the Great War, including stereoscopic depictions of the trench scene. "On those plates of sepia-colored glass were inscribed all the horrors of the world"—the images that by now have been familiarized to unthreatening cliché: trenches oozing with mud, stumps of trees, bodies "sprawled everywhere in every position, bundles of mangled, trampled flesh," "a cadaver halfway out of his hole of clay, arm stiffened, a wedding ring on his finger." For Lartéguy those images, imprinted on his boyhood mind, were the beginning of his lifelong obsession with war, as a combatant and a journalist. They were the starting point of his refusal ever "to allow myself that kind of selective memory which makes certain old soldiers incense-bearers for war, however unconsciously." Mobilized into the French infantry in 1940, he perceived his beaten fellows smelling of "fear, of vomit, of red wine," and came to appreciate Céline's witticism, "Little soldier, what have you done with your rifle?" "I left it on the field of honor."

After the Armistice he fled to Spain and finally arrived in Casablanca, where he joined a French commando group destined to join the invasion of Southern France. This was Lartéguy's "War I Fought In": through the Vosges and into Alsace, men dropping all the time. Here, he says, he came to know "real fear, the

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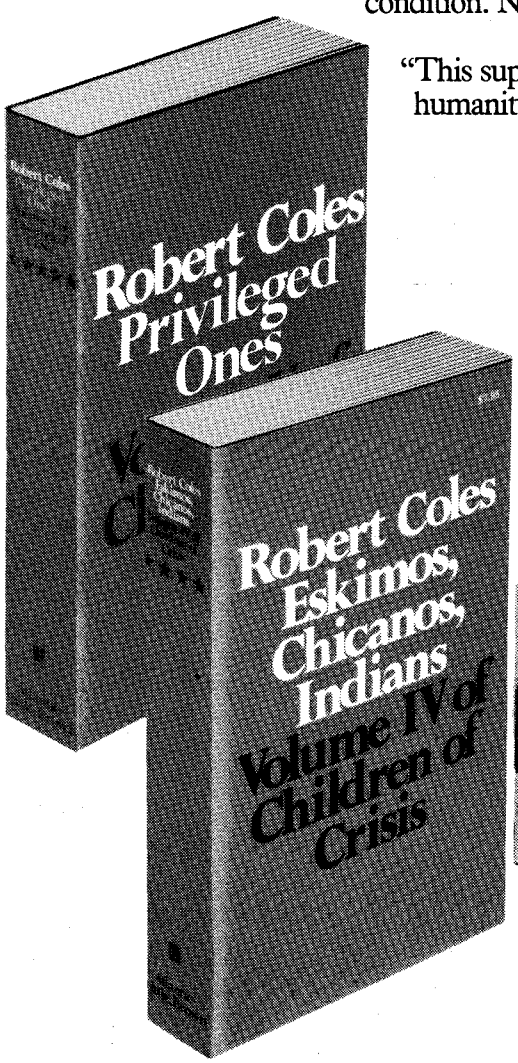

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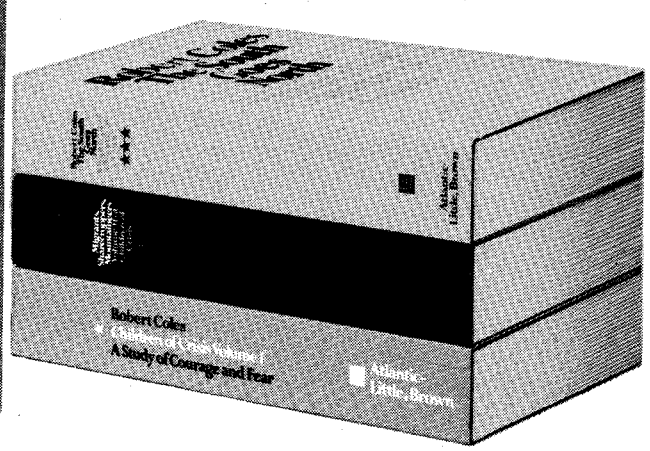

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kind that can turn you into a wet rag, unable to do anything." Here he came to know "the long nights when the least noise starts a man to shaking with fear. And dawn—that terrible hour of dawn, the cursed hour—when everything is discord, when the exhausted sentries give in to sleep, and when the enemy attacks." All this in an atmosphere of absurd command quarrels between General de Lattre de Tassigny ("the great prima donna") and General Leclerc. In World War II Lartéguy learns the truth of what Roger Caillois once wrote (and what Brigadier Pudding, in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, understands as he muses fitfully on his experiences in the Great War): "War possesses the essential characteristics of sacred things. She forbids an objective consideration of what she really is. She paralyzes the spirit of investigation."

Lartéguy's final section, "War I Wrote About," deals first with his life as a lieutenant of infantry in Korea, where, witnessing the Americans coming down from Heartbreak Ridge, he observed that "many, many soldiers had gone mad." Then as a correspondent he covers the French and later the American war in Indochina. What he learns there would seem to apply both to Kissinger's Cambodians and Stroop's Jews: "War likes to simplify things. . . . All those who are different, who are colorful, who give savor to the world, the minorities with their customs and their folklore, all must be destroyed in [war's] big bloody tracks. . . . She knows nothing of nuances." She has thus forwarded that current state of things which Lévi-Strauss has called "monoculture," where the Hilton in Istanbul is indistinguishable from the one in Tokyo, and where even the terrorism grows uniform. The computer, which worked so inefficiently in Vietnam, can be seen not just as war's current toy but as one of her inevitable gifts to the world at large. But war's biggest trap, Lartéguy concludes, is seducing her beholders into imagining they can distinguish between just and unjust wars. Wars are one, just as Stroop and Patton are finally one. Does Lartéguy propose a remedy? Only this: "I see only one acceptable remedy: that we do not any longer deceive ourselves about war, that we tell as much as we have come to know of her as eyewitnesses, without glossing anything over." The soldier's memory has its own tricks of euphemism:

> You only remember the moments of friendship, of great pub crawls, of drinking sprees, of cities taken, and of willing girls. But you sweep under the carpet the wounded who howl their lives away with gaping belly wounds, the fatigue, the exhausting marches, the idiotic orders, the even more stupid counterorders, the disorder, the mess, the lost time, the wasted energy. And the despair you carry with you everywhere as you contemplate the immense stupidity. . . .
>
> The best way to retain a grip on the essence is to remember your fear, your panic. Have you forgotten them? . . . You know that in three hours you have to attack. . . . Your stomach is knotted, you're sweating, you feel like pissing forever. . . . It's the hour at which they awaken those men in their cells who are condemned to death. And you are one of them.

Scene from Frederick Wiseman's *Basic Training*, courtesy of Zipporah Films, Inc.

I don't expect Lartéguy's book to be widely distributed by the Army as required reading for the NATO troops, rehearsing for the event which John Keegan, in *The Face of Battle* (Viking), terms "the land battle in Central Europe." One such rehearsal is the subject of Frederick Wiseman's new documentary film *Manoeuvre*, to be shown early next year on public television. Like his earlier military film *Basic Training* (1971), which laconically suggested the military's usefulness as an arm of the wider welfare system (boys being taught to brush their teeth, etc.), *Manoeuvre* is sensitive and sympathetic, alert to the stubborn differences between individuals despite the uniforms and the jargon and the official prohibition of subtlety. Wiseman follows an armored infantry company from Fort Polk, Louisiana (a dope-sniffing dog goes over everyone's equipment before departure) as it is airlifted to Germany and takes up positions 30 km this side of the border during the annual fall NATO exercises. If in *Basic Training* the focus was largely on NCO's and recruits, here it is on the young officers selecting tank positions and the young umpires computing fictional damage (all, of course, euphemized) from their portable actuarial tables. As the archaic spelling of Wiseman's title implies, it is all as unreal as only war games can be: people do get tired, but no one is terrified, and the tone is that of a professional-social event based on male bonding—rather like a convention held outdoors. Wiseman as usual makes no comment, but the film as a whole makes one: the maneuver is charming and absurd, it says, utterly unrelated to war. No one's eye is found lying on the path to the mess tent. No one's intestines are perceived to be hanging from the fir tree.

It is an assumption of the whole NATO enterprise that in the late 1970s, soldiers asked to immolate themselves in an armored European land battle of the time-honored kind will do so. I wonder. Without a Pearl Harbor to remember, how do you motivate soldiers to prosecute immense traditional land battles? Vietnam, with its fraggings and mainlining of heroin, showed that soldiering may be changing. In *Manoeuvre* I felt certain that only two people would stick it at the crucial moment: one was a nutty lieutenant colonel commanding a

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tank battalion, wild-eyed and adept at chewing out subordinates rhetorically, like an accomplished actor. I think he would hold his position to the death. The other was the captain commanding the armored company. I think he'd probably not run because he is deadly serious about setting an example. About the others I had my doubts. Their talk was largely of pensions and boondoggles, cushy ripoffs in the states or abroad.

Keegan, who brilliantly perceives that "tanks . . . should be thought of not so much as weapons but as theatrical devices," is persuaded that people will not consent to soldier anymore in the old way. "We are faced now with a prospect of battle," he writes, "which through the physical and nervous strain, the 'multiple stress pattern' it will impose on the combatants, threatens to break them down whether or not they come into direct contact with the enemy." And draft or no draft, "the young have already made their decision. They are increasingly unwilling to serve as conscripts in armies they see as ornamental. . . ." (A straw in the wind: the question repeatedly asked me by my university students baffled by the sheeplike behavior of British troops in the Great War. Why did they go over the top? Why did they allow themselves to be victimized so? I try to answer by talking about the former class system and the once conventional public avowal of precepts of religion and duty and the kind of patriotism and pride necessary to hold an empire together. But I know they're not satisfied. They will not accept, and I doubt if they'll participate in, a world where an infantry assault is thinkable.) Thus Keegan may be right when he says:

> It remains for armies to admit that the battles of the future will be fought in never-never land. While the great armored hosts face each other across the boundary between east and west, no soldier on either side will concede that he does not believe in the function for which he plans and trains. As long as states put weapons in their hands, they will show each other the iron face of war. But the suspicion grows that battle has already abolished itself.

Whether we believe that or not, there's one consolation: having soldiered once, a generation will not readily consent to do it again.

Smiley's People
by John le Carré

(Knopf; $10.95)

The English have been fascinated with espionage in this century, and English writers from Kipling, Conrad, and Buchan in the years before World War I to Graham Greene and John le Carré in the present have produced much excellent spy fiction. Reasons for this fascination abound. One might mention the effect of the British Official Secrets Act in keeping the English citizen mind aflame with fantasies of secret government and government secrets. The vulgar yet widespread English enjoyment of tittle-tattle about and spying upon the high aristocracy and Royal Household may nurture a taste for spy stories. Then there is the English delight in deceptive games, impersonations, and all puzzles, especially mazes, crosswords, acrostics, and brain teasers, which translates readily into a facility with secret codes and signals, with disguising, hiding, and disappearing, the laying of false trails and clues, plus all the other trickery of the professional field agent. Finally put in the upper-middle-class cult of boyish mischief against constituted authority, which is associated with all-male public (i.e. private) schools from Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* onward, and which is certainly the starting point for any adequate consideration of those fun defectors, double agents, and moles in actual English life during the past two decades, Guy and Donald and Kim and Sir Anthony.

Mention of Burgess, Maclean, Philby, and Blount elicits the thought that organized British Intelligence in real life has not been very effective, no doubt because Britain, the Official Secrets Act notwithstanding, is a very open society and easy to betray. Efficient intelligence must be easier to organize in police states in which individuals have no right to privacy that may offset the overweening right of government to snoop. John le Carré, who appears to know everything about modern espionage that there is to know, faces the problem in his spy fiction of giving a generally favorable account of British Intelligence in the very era of these spectacular betrayals and defections. And he must do this, if we are to take him at all seriously, without undue indulgence in wish-fulfillment fantasy and razzle-dazzle effects. It is an interesting problem and tension in the work of a writer whose readiness with razzle-dazzle has earned him a large popular audience and yet whose novels seem seriously to try to tell the truth about his time. *Is* he a serious novelist, or a mere entertainer, or something in between? Here is le Carré's new novel, *Smiley's People*, to help determine that question.

Smiley's People completes a massive trilogy begun in *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (1974) and continued in *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1977). It pits George Smiley of the top echelon of British Intelligence, known as "the Circus" from its Cambridge Circus, London, address, against a nameless antagonist (code name "Karla") high in KGB officialdom at "Moscow Centre," in a battle that is not to the death but to defection. George is "small, podgy, and at best middle-aged . . . by appearance one of London's meek who do not inherit the earth," and constant references to his "decency" mark him as a literary derivation from the decent little middle-class Englishmen of Wells, Orwell, and the early Graham Greene. Except that George is smart as hell, had a brilliant record as a spy in Germany during World War II, and does philology and German poetry as hobbies on the side.

Smiley is doubly acquainted with grief, first because he is childless and his beautiful, silly wife sleeps around, and second because he has risen to the top job of his beloved Circus just at the time when its networks have been wrecked by Karla's moles—"a mole is a deep-penetration agent so called because he burrows deep into the fabric of Western Imperialism, in this case an Englishman" (*Tinker, Tailor*). He is also harassed by Whitehall budget cutters and parliamentary reformers.

Karla, the antagonist, is George's double in that he too is little, podgy, aging, brilliant at his work, and not very happy or fortunate in his domestic arrangements. Since he is Red his motivation must be fanatical and "absolutist," his methods merciless;

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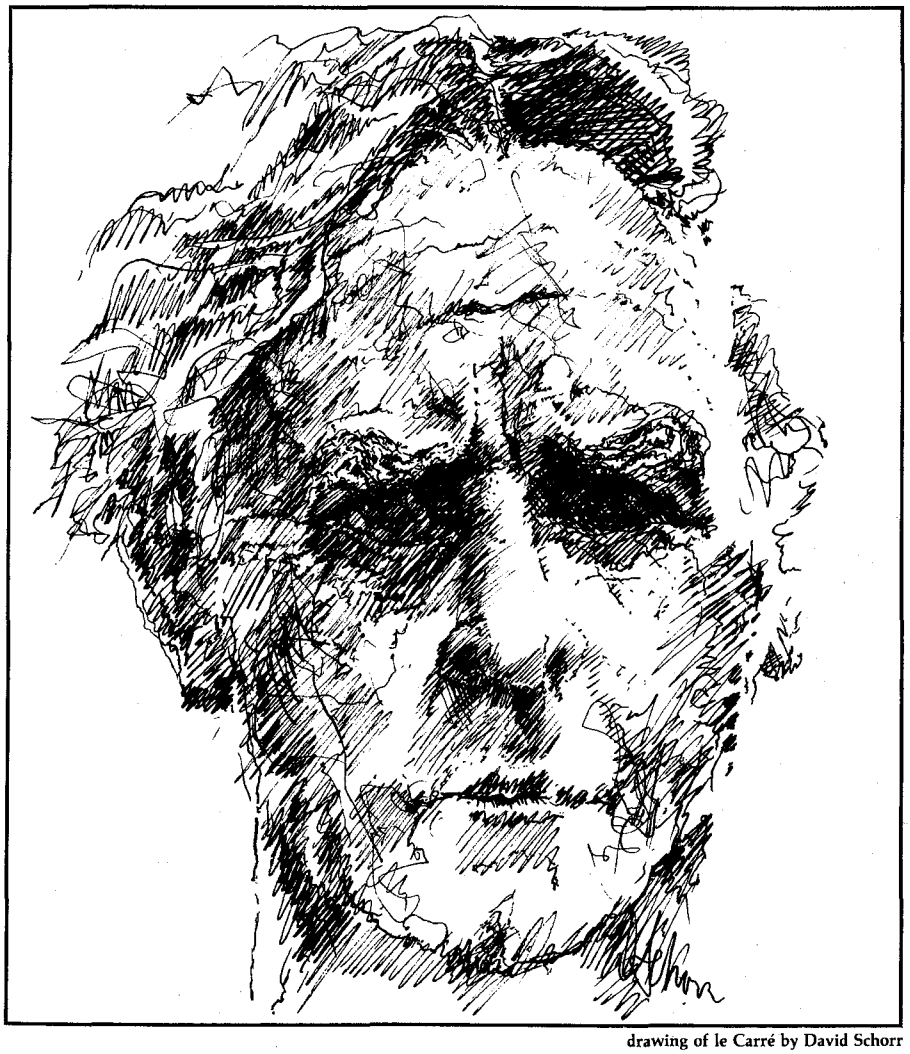
whereas Smiley's motive and method are always described as "reasonable." Whether the novelist is putting a fat thumb into the scales of his fiction on this point remains to be seen. One oddity of Karla's presentation is his designation by a feminine name. This acquires significance because the talents and energies of women are so largely discounted in "the secret world" as le Carré conceives it. The pretty younger women are mostly tarts, the older ones who have actually pursued a career in Intelligence are depicted as eccentric, alcoholic, and ill, and the ones in between tend to be tea-pouring secretaries or dumb housewives. How can Karla win with a name like Karla?

Of course he doesn't win although in each novel he gives George quite a drubbing before being beaten in the end. The trilogy as a whole enacts an exemplary tale of English tortoise and Russian hare. In *Tinker, Tailor* Karla's mole, Bill Haydon, a Kim Philby figure, having penetrated to the heart of the Circus, feeds its spy networks in Eastern Europe to Karla's wolves until he is detected by Smiley and then offed—against decent and reasonable regulations, of course—by one of the Czech network's few survivors. In *The Honourable Schoolboy*, a tale of oriental chicane that is much inferior to its companion volumes, Smiley finds that Karla has a Chinese mole reporting to Moscow Centre from a mainland Chinese Defense Ministry post and proceeds to draw even with Karla by grabbing this chap, one Nelson Ko, when he comes to Hong Kong for a reunion with his brother. In *Smiley's People* George pretty well makes all the running, as the English would say, when by learning of certain skeletons in Karla's family closet, he is able to pressure his opponent actually to defect *in propria persona*. It took a long time but, as the Spanish say, revenge is a dish best eaten cold.

The concluding scene of *Smiley's People* shows Karla crossing alone from East to West Berlin under the gaze of George and several of his agents. It is a very elaborately styled set piece but I prefer some wonderful pages earlier when the boss stepped out of his bureaucratic role and did some dangerous investigative work by himself along the German coast north of Hamburg. Our sympathetic interest goes out to the lonely agent beset by danger on all sides but much less so to the top executive savoring success among his minions. We know that Smiley has ruined many lives, some innocent, in his tenacious pursuit of Karla; that he once sent a sadistic young killer to eliminate one of his own favorite agents whose disobedience threatened the success of an operation in progress; that many more people will die as the result of Karla's "debriefing" by tough professional "inquisitors"; and we just don't believe that the dirty tricks of one side are OK because they were ordered up by a decent little English guy with a disarming name.



drawing of le Carré by David Schorr

In short, the book is mostly entertainment, quite good entertainment, the sort of read a half-pay KGB colonel like Philby might enjoy in his Moscow retirement, to get through the long, dull Russian winter.

Julian Moynahan

Julian Moynahan teaches at Rutgers and is author, most recently, of the novel *Where the Land and Water Meet* (Morrow).

Gandhi: A Memoir
by William A. Shirer

(Simon & Schuster; $12.95)

Although William Shirer had direct contact with Gandhi only in 1930 and 1931 (when he was the *Chicago Tribune*'s India correspondent) he still feels, he tells us in 1979, that Gandhi was his "greatest teacher." "I count the days with Gandhi the most fruitful of my life. No other experience was as inspiring and as meaningful and as lasting." This is rather glibly phrased, and the book as

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a whole is glibly written—even slipshod; but still I presume Shirer means what he says, and knows what he means, and this strikes me as remarkable.

It is not remarkable in that Shirer's feelings are unique. Many journalists who had contact with Gandhi said similar things; among Americans, Louis Fischer, Edgar Snow, Vincent Sheean, John Gunther. What is remarkable is rather that men of that sort by and large did make such a generous and in some sense devout response to Gandhi. And that men of another sort, whom we usually think of as being more spiritually serious, did not, notably men of letters, like D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis. These latter could have been expected to say something about Gandhi, something which would at least have expressed the recognition of a major challenge, of a major candidate for their enthusiastic endorsement or opposition; but they remained effectively silent and indifferent.

Why were the journalists so impressed, while the men of letters were not? Gandhi was of course both good copy and personally pleasant. As Shirer says, most of the "political greats" he'd met had been "intent on impressing you with the forcefulness of their personalities and the boldness of their minds," while Gandhi was "the most gentle and unassuming of men." That must have made a potent mixture. Shirer describes the crowd hysteria Gandhi evoked—crowds of 100,000 at a time, often out of their own and anybody else's control—and the little man himself spinning in silence in the midst of it.

But what Shirer says, more than once, about what he owes Gandhi suggests something more personal than this external sense of his power over others. "What I had got from Gandhi helped me to survive. It showed the way to the development of an inner life, which over that considerable time became ingrained enough, and strong and sufficient enough, to ward off all the assaults from the outside." This clearly seems to claim a spiritual affiliation and ascesis. And yet there are several signs in the book that—as one would have predicted—Gandhi's "simple-minded" religiosity strongly irritated the young journalist.

No doubt the short-term answer to this puzzle is that Shirer, like other journalists, is driven both to doubt and subvert all the simple affirmations he is given, but also to lean heavily on the simplest and earliest received of them all. In his autobiography, *20th Century Journey*, we read that Shirer grew up in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where his family, like hundreds of others, habitually went on Sundays to visit Amana, a Christian communitarian settlement of German Pietists. The visitors ate Sunday lunch in one or another of the communal eating houses, stared at the unpainted wooden houses and their unsophisticated inhabitants, who had renounced both property and profits, and then went back to their own lives shaped by property and profits. Shirer lived in Cedar Rapids from 1913 to 1924, from age nine to 21. That experience, however little he consciously recalled it in this connection, must have prepared him for Gandhi, who inherited the emotion aroused by those early impressions of a nobler alternative.

But most men of his generation had that kind or that much reason to respond to Gandhi. So perhaps we should ask rather why the men of letters didn't respond—ask what we think of the sophistication that protected them against him. However we analyze it, it was a sophistication most intellectuals nowadays also share. Since I have said I am writing a book about Gandhi, I have been struck by the comments of colleagues and friends. They were striking in their preliminary assumptions and feeling tone. Apart from the malevolence of those who understand Gandhi's purpose, and hate him for his attempt to root out the violence in himself and others, there is the mere malice of those who don't understand but deduce that he must have been either simple-minded or hypocritical. These are strong feelings in intellectuals. Of the viceroys who knew Gandhi, the bitterest things about him were said by the most literary, Lord Wavell: "a malevolent old politician. . . . Shrewd, obstinate, domineering, double-tongued . . . little of true saintliness about him."

Of course, the praise of those who praised him is, in its infelicity and philistinism, equally alien. Mountbatten, "Mahatma Gandhi will go down in history on a par with Buddha and Jesus Christ"; and MacArthur, "If civilization is to survive, men cannot fail eventually to adopt Gandhi's beliefs." There is something in Gandhi that brings out the worst in the Western mind, whether the conscious feelings are friendly or not.

Shirer reports an exchange which

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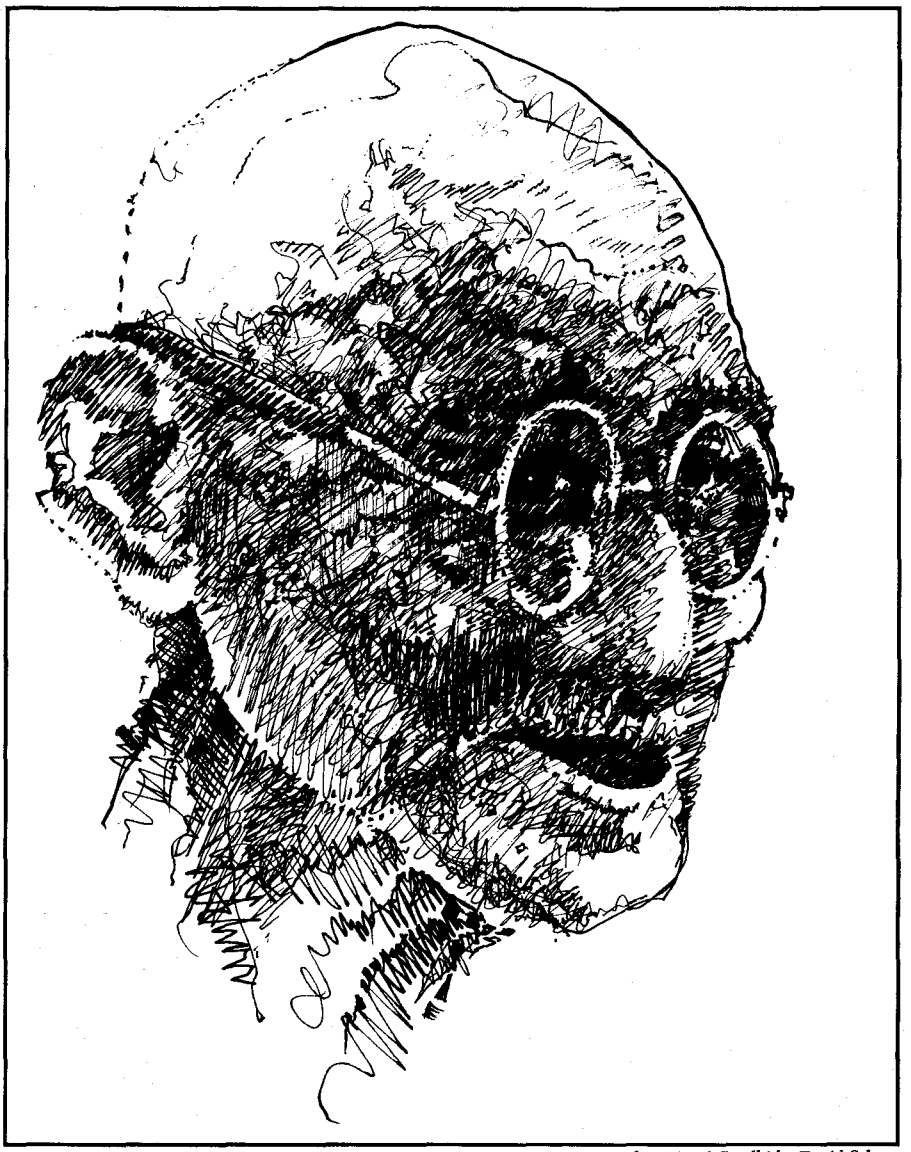
brings out the cross-purposes and the bafflement of Westerners. In their first interview, in 1930, he noted the prominent part being played by women in the Indian independence movement, and asked Gandhi how he accounted for it. "'It can only be the work of God,' he smiled. It was the kind of answer I would often get from Gandhi, and I was not satisfied with it, not this first time nor later." There you see the Western mind, with its stern passion for cause-and-effect explanations, a passion common to journalists and intellectuals. Why are women active *now*? The same question has been asked recently about other insurgences of feminism and surely we know by now that there is no cause-and-effect answer; there are a thousand interesting comparisons, speculations, questions about the question, and a flood of information to be released in response to it; but there is no explanation. Gandhi "accounted for" the phenomenon by summarizing his reflections upon it, which culminated in God. This does not display his mind in interesting activity, or call forth interesting activity from other minds, but it is a perfectly adequate response, intellectually as well as practically. "Mixing up religion and politics" Shirer calls it, indignantly, but these are categories of thought, not of fact, and both can be applied to the same phenomenon.

Perhaps this seems obvious enough, and not the sort of mistake *we* would make (though it's worth noting that Nehru had the same reaction as Shirer). But in fact it is Gandhi's refusal to engage in metaphysical or dialectical activity, Western or Eastern, his reliance on the categorical imperative and the narrow range of consciousness surrounding that, that aroused and arouses intellectuals against him.

And certainly Gandhi was no intellectual, in any ordinary sense of the term,



drawing of Gandhi by David Schorr

while Nehru certainly was. Yet how shabby Nehru's dialectical historicism sounds now. Shirer tells us that Nehru did not condone Bhagat Singh's alleged deed (assassination) because "he thought terrorism was out of date for the stage the Indian revolution had reached by nonviolence." On the other hand, I find a good deal of interest in Gandhi's idea of, for instance, caste—which merely shocked Shirer and Nehru. Gandhi declared that there was great social use in a Brahmin's being always a Brahmin; it was of course the hereditary obligation caste brought that appealed to him. And he said that caste had saved India from disintegration. Gandhi loved (as Ruskin did) the mutual responsibility symbolized by the Varna system; the four great functions, imparting knowledge, defending the defenseless, carrying on agriculture and commerce, and performing service through physical labor. And surely it was a shrewd historical instinct that led him to see in that tradition, still alive in India, his country's best defense against the unhappy class conflict and social atomism which he saw ravaging the West. Probably the major ameliorations of capitalist individualism have derived from the lingering countertruths of caste.

But the major fact is still that Shirer responded generously, and learned from Gandhi how to "survive the strains of all the brutal man-made upheavals and the barbarism and the hypocrisy we have lived through in our time, and providing a certain light that helped to guide me." It is the sad fate of those who try to save society that their message is ignored, and they are allowed only to help individuals (often those who are doing the most damage socially) with their private problems. But it is to Shirer's honor, and that of all journalists, that he and they responded, and wrote often nobly about Gandhi, when men of letters did not. Take for instance Edgar Snow's report on the assassination. "What I remember about being at Birla

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House the night Gandhi was killed was how much more terrible a moment it was than anyone can describe in words. . . . There was a mirror in the Mahatma in which everyone could see the best in himself, and when the mirror broke, it seemed that the thing in oneself might be fled forever." And in the *Hindustan Standard*, the editorial page appeared edged in black and was blank except for "Gandhiji has been killed by his own people for whose redemption he lived. This second crucifixion in the history of the world has been enacted on a Friday—the same day Jesus was done to death 1915 years ago. Father, forgive us." For the great moments in history, it seems, our journalists serve us better than our poets.

Martin Green

Martin Green teaches at Tufts and is author, most recently, of *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (Basic Books).

From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World by Eugene D. Genovese

(Lousiana State University Press; $9.95)

I, for one, have long wanted to announce the end of discussions about slave resistance. But Eugene Genovese has changed my mind. In this book, he has taken what was a dreary and fruitless debate and cast it in new and provocative terms, revealing more about the dynamics of change in slave consciousness than about the personalities of the enslaved. It is a welcome departure from the tendentious argument about whether slaves understood, wanted, or were "manly" enough to win their freedom.

The debate, as Professor Genovese found it, originated in 19th-century arguments over slavery itself. The apologists for slavery pointed to the rarity of slave insurrections in the United States to justify the "peculiar institution." Since resistance was minimal, they argued, slaves must have been lacking in the spirit that compelled Euro-Americans to apostrophize "Liberty or Death." By implication, Afro-Americans were natural slaves and the system that enthralled them was so benign as to leave their docile natures undisturbed. The argument is a rationale common to oppressors, colonizers, and tyrants. It explains the system of exploitation in terms of the character of the victims rather than the monopoly of power in the hands of the victimizers. Until the middle of the present century, American historians, eager to celebrate a national history of individual freedom and democracy, warmly promoted this explanation for the anomaly of slavery in the liberal United States.

From the beginning, there had been those who denied the assumptions behind this argument. They pointed to attempted insurrections, countless efforts to escape, the often grudging compliance of slaves, and their valor in the Union Army as ample evidence that slaves were willing to fight for freedom. In *American Negro Slave Revolts* (1943), Herbert Aptheker marshaled seemingly every instance and every rumor of slave resistance, and Kenneth Stampp, in *The Peculiar Institution* (1957), properly emphasized force and coercion as the principal instruments of slave management. So much for the "naturally" docile and contented slave.

The argument might well have ended there but for Stanley Elkins's attempt to draw an analogy between the survivors of German concentration camps and slaves in the United States. In his provocative but flawed *Slavery* (1959), he described both as childlike, docile, and malleable—personifications of the Sambo stereotype. Not an apologist for slavery, Elkins found the sytem itself responsible for making Sambos of its subjects, as the concentration camps had made hollow men and women of survivors. To make his point about slaves, Elkins relied heavily on what he took to be the few and feeble efforts at resistance by slaves in the United States as compared with those in Brazil and the Caribbean. Again, resistance became an index of character.

In the wake of Elkins's work came a new wave of books and articles defending the slave's personality in terms of a willingness to fight the system. It was not enough to describe the major conspiracies and uprisings—those led by Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner—but "day-to-day" resistance had to be included as well. Everything was tossed in: breaking of tools, ineptitude in work, self-mutilation, infanticide, suicide. Romantic fantasies about class divisions among slaves were evoked in accounts of rebellious field hands subverted in their struggles for freedom by house servants who were imagined to be complacent Uncle Toms. Some would accept Sambo as accurately descriptive of one type of slave, but would add other types: the rebellious slave and the trickster, who was the indefatigable deceiver, always putting on ole massa. Where Ulrich B. Phillips's racialist views made him treat slave resistance as criminal behavior, we were now in danger of considering truly criminal anomic behavior as rebellion.

Too often lacking social or psychological sophistication, these discussions of slave resistance reflected a curiously masculine view of character and virtue. To argue about whether slaves were "emasculated" or "manly," by citing their passivity or resistance, indicates a simplistic conception of human motivation and the strengths of character needed to avoid temptations to acts of feckless desperation. Seemingly impervious to the invidiousness of the questions asked, these writers never considered that Hungarians, Czechs, South African blacks, and other victims of tyranny are never asked to prove their "manhood" by desperate and futile rebellion against overwhelming odds.

Happily, Eugene Genovese has slipped the yoke fashioned by Ulrich B. Phillips and Stanley Elkins and freed us from yet another round of that dismal old debate. He accepts at the outset what should have been obvious all along—that slave resistance depended on opportunity. The frequency, scale, and success of resistance were less matters of personality and racial characteristics than of demography, geography, and the consolidation of forces arrayed against the slaves. He compares events in Brazil, the Caribbean, and North America to demonstrate this point. In analyzing various uprisings, escapes, and the maroon settlements created by escaped slaves in the wilderness, Genovese cuts beneath the obvious differences in scale and success to discover fundamental

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similarities. Until the historical "turning point" of the slave revolt in Saint-Dominigue in the late 18th century, the efforts of slave groups to free themselves from oppression lacked the proper revolutionary ideology and, therefore, lacked a revolutionary consciousness. In their successes as maroon colonies, for instance, they would attempt to restore as far as possible the world they had known before being snatched up as elements of expanding European mercantile capitalism. Like West African merchants and chiefs, the maroons had no quarrel with slavery since it did not oppress them; nor was race sufficient to make them automatically identify with their fellows in chains. Often enough, they made alliances with white authority, agreeing to help and suppress slave uprisings and return fugitives. Genovese, acknowledging his debt to Eric Hobsbawm, makes useful comparisons with peasant uprisings in pre-industrial Europe, emphasizing historical—rather than racial or cultural—determinants for the behavior of the oppressed. Comparative history, which so often is less comparative analysis than erudite display, has seldom been done better than in this book.

The revolution under Toussaint L'Ouverture (and later Dessalines and Henri Christophe) in Saint-Dominigue was not an effort to restore a lost African world or to create a maroon enclave. Rather, the revolutionaries hoped to forge a modern black state and to make it part of the modern, mercantile world. Haiti's revolution was part of the revolutionary wave that swept the Western world at the end of the 18th century. It was inspired by, and in its turn, influenced and helped shape the direction and character of the French Revolution. Likewise, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and Haiti influenced the slave conspiracies that would follow in the United States. Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner were revolutionaries; their countless maroon predecessors were not. The ideology of the revolutionary era made the difference. Not merely breaking for freedom, the revolutionaries wanted to transform the system to conform to the principles of Natural Rights and the Declaration of Independence. Liberty, equality, and fraternity were in the minds of the Haitian leaders, as were assumptions about the "rights of man" in the minds and hearts of their North American brothers. That is what made them revolutionaries rather than rebels. With this provocative thesis, Eugene Genovese transforms the discussion of slave resistance so as to confront questions of genuine historical weight and relevance.

Like much of Genovese's recent work, the crux of this book turns on what men think and imagine rather than on changes in their objective circumstances. In both *The World the Slaveholders Made* (1969) and *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (1974) the relationship between master and slave rested more on matters of mind (assumptions and attitudes) than on substantial, material reality. I find this emphasis on ideas and values ironic in a Marxist historian, however much a revisionist he is. Has Eugene Genovese stood Marx on his head and become a kind of Hegelian? Or would it be more accurate, as well as more generous, to describe his revisionism as a synthesis of Marxian materialism and Hegelian idealism? Have it your own way, but in this book he brings a fresh breath of air into a musty old room.

Nathan Irvin Huggins

Nathan Irvin Huggins is a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. His most recent books are *Black Odyssey: the Afro-American Ordeal in Slavery* (Pantheon) and the forthcoming *Slave and Citizen: the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Little, Brown).

Meyer Lansky: Mogul of the Mob
by Dennis Eisenberg, Uri Dan, and Eli Landau

(Paddington Press; $11.95)

This is the book about Meyer Lansky we've been waiting for. Not that it contains any startling new revelations about the criminal career of the man whom the authors dub the "mogul of the mob." The fact that Lansky has been behind bars only once—and that for a mere three months—despite decades of effort by law enforcement officials to nail him on a host of charges, shows how successful he has been in covering his tracks. No, if this new biography is important, it is not because of what it reveals about Meyer Lansky the gangster, but because of what it tells us about Mair Suchowljansky the Jew. Born in Grodno, Poland, in 1902, Mair came to the United States in 1911 and graduated from PS 34 and the Lower East Side school of hard knocks to become the Jewish kingpin of American crime, a staunch Zionist, and finally a would-be immigrant to Israel. By bringing these matters into focus, Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau do, in fact, enable us to understand Meyer Lansky as a criminal—indeed, to see him as the prototype of the Jewish gangster.

Several years ago, in *Honor Thy Father*, Gay Talese caused a stir by arguing that *mafiosi* have much the same attitudes and aspirations as members of legitimate society, a point Daniel Bell had made more than a quarter of a century before in his classic essay "Crime as an American Way of Life." Organized crime, Bell argued, is a "Coney Island mirror caricaturing the morals and manners of a society." Far from rejecting conventional American values, underworld figures affirm them—albeit in a "queer" manner. Like hunters, cowboys, frontiersmen, and soldiers before them, they seek to acquire "by personal merit what [is] denied to [them] by [the] complex orderings of a stratified society." Within the framework of America's "ever-shifting structure of group, class, and ethnic stratification," criminal activity is simply one more way of rising in the world.

Viewing underworld figures as normal members of society opens up all kinds of possibilities for the study of organized crime, especially the Jewish involvement in it. After all, as the paradigmatic outsiders of Western society Jews have been masters of social adaptation. Anti-Semites and parochial Jews alike agree, citing a range of evidence from Sammy Glick to Henry Kissinger, that Jews are an achievement-oriented group, adept at getting ahead. When given a little elbow room, as in the United States, Jews have performed extraordinarily well. Might it

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not be, then, that Jewish gangsters are caught up in the same psychosocial compulsions as other American Jews; that, like the bright young students on the Ivy League campuses, the trendy literary intellectuals, the high-powered political confidants—all recognizable Jewish types—Jewish mobsters are simply trying to earn a living and get ahead?

If this seems implausible or outrageous, consider the evidence that Rudolf Glanz presents in a remarkable study of Jewish crime which was privately published in New York in 1968. Glanz definitively establishes the existence of a tradition of Jewish crime dating back to at least the 17th century. Then as now, Jewish criminal activity was a form of adaptive behavior, with the *Gauner* (robbers and swindlers) trying to eke out a living in a hostile Gentile environment. To carry out their activities, the members of the Jewish underworld disguised themselves as Christians; shaved off their beards, spoke in local dialects, loudly invoked Christ's name when pulling off their capers, and even left pieces of pork at the scenes of their crimes. At the same time, the *Gauner*, in their private lives, were often loyal to Jewish tradition—keeping the dietary laws, attending services, observing the Sabbath, avoiding heavy drinking, and preserving strong family ties. Glanz demonstrates that Jewish criminal bands remained active in Central Europe until the middle of the 19th century, when the *Gauner*, taking advantage of new opportunities for Jews, either turned to legitimate pursuits or emigrated to the United States.

Glanz's study makes it clear that knowing more about Jewish crime can add appreciably to an understanding of the larger Jewish experience. But there is another reason for examining the careers of Jewish gangsters—they have made vital contributions to the development of American crime. Aside from Meyer Lansky, there is Arnold "the Brain" Rothstein, the "pioneer big businessman of crime, who, understanding the logic of coordination, sought to *organize* crime as a source of regular income." Two of Rothstein's chief successors in the early 1930s were Lepke Buchalter and Gurrah Shapiro, who, as the heads of "Murder, Inc.," pioneered in the field of industrial racketeering. It was Moe Annenberg who first made bookmaking a lucrative business when, in the 1920s, he established the racing-wire news service that "gather[ed] information from tracks and sho[t] it immediately to scratch sheets, horse parlors, and bookie joints." Las Vegas was the brainchild of Bugsy Siegel, who built the Flamingo Hotel in what later became "Glitter Gulch." And not to be forgotten are Israel "Ice Pick" Alderman, Otto "Abbadabba" Berman, Abe Bernstein, Mickey Cohen, Moe Dalitz, Jack "Legs" Diamond, Tootsie Feinstein, Waxey Gordon, Harry "Big Greenie" Greenberg, Solly Gross, Benny Harris, Max "Boo-Boo" Hoff, Hyman "Curly" Holtz, "Dandy" Phil Kastel, Jacob "Yasha" Katzenberg, Phil "the Stick" Kovolick, Louis "Shadows" Kravitz, Sam "Red" Levine, Abe "Kid Twist" Relis, Nig Rosen, Harry "Sweeney"

Meyer Lansky. Photo from book.

Rosenberg, Louis Rothkepf, Irving "Tabbo" Sandler, Joseph "Doc" Stacher, Dutch Schultz, Charles "King" Solomon, Morris "Moe Dimples" Wolensky, Charlie "the Bug" Workman, and Abner "Longie" Zwillman—a veritable Who's Who of American crime, comparable to that contributed by any other ethnic group.

Which brings me to Meyer Lansky. Lansky is a remarkable figure, and he deserves better than the treatment he received several years ago in Hank Messick's biography (*Lansky*; 1971). Not that Messick denied Lansky his due as a gangster. Indeed, after detailing what was known about his criminal activities—his bootlegging operations during Prohibition, his decades-long alliance with Lucky Luciano, his vast gambling ventures in Florida, Las Vegas, and Cuba, his ingenious schemes for laundering enormous sums of illegal funds—Messick went on to argue that the Little Man, as Lansky was called, was, in fact, the "Chairman of the Board" of the "National Crime Syndicate." Because he adopted a simplistic good guys-bad guys approach to crime, however, Messick failed to provide an adequate explanation for Lansky's criminal career.

The strength of *Meyer Lansky: Mogul of the Mob* is that it presents its subject as a flesh and blood human being. The key factor here is the close relationship that developed between Lansky and one of the book's authors, Uri Dan, a respected Israeli journalist. It seems clear from reading between the lines that Lansky approached Dan during his stay in Israel in 1971, hoping that the latter might write about him in a positive light, thus strengthening his application for Israeli citizenship. While the application was denied and the Israeli government, acting under pressure from the Nixon administration, forced Lansky to leave the country, the Little Man and Dan remained good friends. The basis of their friendship, as Dan describes it, was "mutual respect":

> It was almost as if he unconsciously saw me as the representative of a new and different generation of Jews. We had to be told what he considered the truth. . . . In his eyes we Israelis had been molded by blood, violence, and a struggle for survival and power in the sands of the Middle East. Meyer perceived his background on New York's Lower East Side as similar, though in a different setting. He felt a kinship with me that transcended generations, cultures, and continents. I listened to him with an open and unprejudiced mind.

While Dan makes this comment in passing, it provides the key to an understanding of Lansky's criminal career. Uri Dan the Israeli and Meyer (Mair) Lansky (Suchowljansky) the Diaspora Jew relate so well to each other because they both embody the Jewish quest for "normalcy"—which is arguably the essence of Zionism. No less a figure than Hayyim Nahman Bialik, the "Jewish national poet," was prepared to state that a "normal Jewish nation will have arrived the day the first Jewish horse thief is arrested in Tel-Aviv."

Bailik's comment would certainly win the approval of Meyer Lansky. For decades, the Little Man has been trying to demonstrate his own "normalcy"—to show the *goyim*, and particularly the *goyishe* gangsters, that he can beat them at their own game. Lansky stressed just this point in this conversations with Uri Dan, specifically referring to his "con-

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THE WELDER

It had been my last night in that city.
And its streets, though they fed into the hills
Of mankind, the loggias of Tuscany,
Funneled an air next morning that was Isaac's,
Slicing beneath tentflaps, sauced with the shifting
And raw silts of the fords.

My night had dusted gold on the coverlet's
Plain border, with illegible notes in ink.
Daylight: a storefront with its French card game,
Twenty-four landscapes to be recombined
Septillion ways—plumed soldiers, hoop skirts, pines,
Hoop skirts, carriages. And the gift, my round
Of hours, disarranged yet, either more
Or less than the canonical allotment.
What they still seemed was dangerous.

The distance to the last well, named *Rehoboth*
Or *Room*, stays unsettled until the wellhead
Has been left undefiled and the belled herds
Go uncut by marauders.

Think of it: at a new fire on old ground,
Old because final now, the man extracts
The deck and spreads his span of combinations.
Neither is that wholly restful.

Molten pewter muscled around bridge piers,
Poured through reflected gawkers. One rusty duck
Floated across a man's chest. —May the air
Be at least that fine in the place of mirrors,
Be at least that warm there.

Down a last street I glimpsed him: in the black
Gap of a garage, a lean mechanic
Lighting up his first smoke with cupped hands
And praying eyes, his welding tanks set by
At casual distance in that greasy quarry,
Benzene from his anointed floor already
Cutting into the morning.

John Peck

viction" that "a Jew should lead a normal life." When Dan asked Lansky if he had any regrets about his life as a gangster, the Little Man responded:

> When you ask me that question you send me back to my youth. When I was young I thought Jews should be treated like other people. I remember [a] young soldier in Grodno who said Jews should stand up and fight. I guess you could say I've come a long way from Grodno and . . . the Lower East Side, but I still believe him. . . . I wouldn't have lived my life any other way.

During the 1930s he and his friends broke up pro-Nazi rallies ("The main point was to teach them that Jews couldn't be kicked around"); during World War II, he convinced Lucky Luciano to cooperate with US Intelligence in preparing for the invasion of Sicily ("I wanted the Nazis beaten. I made this my number one priority . . ."); during Israel's war of independence, he joined with other Jewish underworld figures in smuggling arms to the newly created Jewish State ("They [Israeli agents] asked me to help Israel. 'What's the problem?' I asked. 'I'm at your service'"). Finally, during the 1950s and 1960s, he became a United Jewish Appeal stalwart ("In 1967, during the Six Day War, I went to speak to some of the boys in Miami who were not known as generous when it came to making contributions. I told them this was the time for them to open their pockets, and open them wide.")

There are, no doubt, those who would argue that Lansky's decision to settle in Israel had nothing to do with Zionism; that he was simply seeking to avoid criminal prosecution in the United States. Then why Israel? Why not any one of a dozen countries around the world that would have been happy—for a price—to offer him refuge? No, if Lansky went to Israel, it was because he saw it as the logical final step; because he wanted to live in the country that exemplified the Jewish quest for "normalcy." By turning down his application for citizenship (the authors of *Meyer Lansky: Mogul of the Mob* claim that the Nixon administration threatened to withhold Phantom jets from Israel if the Little Man was allowed to stay there), Lansky's fellow Zionists sentenced him to a life of permanent exile in Miami Beach (US charges against him having been dropped) among the *goyishe* gangsters.

David Singer

David Singer is the editor of the *American Jewish Year Book*.

Brief Reviews

Abigail Adams: An American Woman by Charles Ackers

(Little, Brown; $9.95)

If Abigail Adams (1744-1818) "exemplified what it meant to be a woman, an American, and a revolutionary of the transitional period between colonial status and independence," as Oscar Handlin writes in his preface to this concise biography, hers was an example few of her contemporaries managed to follow. Charles Ackers argues that although Adams thought of herself, traditionally enough, as a wife and mother, she gave those roles an unexpectedly modern definition.

Married to a man who played a leading part in the American Revolution and became the second president of the US, Abigail Adams experienced both an unconventional private life and an unusual exposure to public affairs. As her more than 2000 extant letters show, this independent-minded woman reflected constantly and carefully on her life and the life of her country. She concluded that women in republican America had an important and special

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role, different from the European notion of womanhood. As wives and mothers, American women were to advise and train their husbands and sons in moral and political leadership. How can America turn out "Heroes, Statesmen and Philosophers," she asked, without also producing "learned women"; she counseled the founding fathers to "remember the Ladies and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors" and urged them to promote education and equality for women (enfranchisement of women was beyond reasonable hope, she felt).

Abigail Adams, adequately educated at home and married to a man who respected her as an equal, made the most of her circumstances in the republic, which were at once difficult and fortunate. She did not enjoy peaceful domesticity with John Adams after their marriage in 1764, but was continually left alone to cope with their farm and their growing family while her husband was in Europe and Philadelphia seeing to the nation's affairs, as delegate, diplomat, vice president, and then president. Abigail Adams was acutely aware of their sacrifice of affluence and domestic stability for the public good, but instead of harboring resentment she developed an intense patriotic spirit. John Adams insisted that she be his "fellow Labourer," and letters written shortly after his inauguration show he meant it. "I never wanted your Advice and assistance more in my Life," he wrote and, later, "the Times are critical and dangerous, and I must have you here to assist me." She was outspoken in her advice, which almost always agreed with her husband's inclinations; she urged independence for the colonies as tension with England increased, campaigned actively for her husband for vice president and president, advised war against revolutionary France in 1798 and then moved, with her husband, toward support for a policy of peace. In the midst of her political activities, she found time to voice views on social, sexual, and religious topics as well.

Ackers has written the first full study of Abigail Adams since the Adams Papers were opened, and he succinctly rounds out our view of that accomplished woman in her time. In addition to discussing her public role, he confirms the popular notion of her passionate personal life (sometimes a bit ludicrously: describing the Adams's newly married state, he writes, "Their stored-up passion burst loose and she became pregnant at once"). Nearing 50, Abigail Adams herself had a more restrained but encompassing view of her relation to her husband. When John Adams wrote, "I am as impatient to see you as I used to be 20 years ago," Abigail wrote back:

> Years subdue the ardour of passion but in lieu thereof a Friendship and affection deep rooted subsists which defies the Ravages of Time, and will survive whilst the vital Flame exists. Our attachment to Character, Reputation and Fame increase I believe with our Years.

Ackers has judiciously evaluated the character, reputation, and fame of Abigail Adams, whose life—she was a learned woman who advised one statesman, her husband, and raised another, her son—realized her hopes for the American woman.

Ann Hulbert

To Lose a Battle: France 1940 by Alistair Horne

(Penguin Books; $5.95)

The German defeat of the French army in the spring of 1940 was one of the most brilliant campaigns in modern history. Using a ploy dubbed the "Matador's cloak," Hitler's generals drew a large element of the French army up into Belgium, while the mortal thrust of the Matador came on the French border itself, at Sedan, where on May 13 Panzer columns under General Heinz Guderian pierced France's first and only line of defense. Then, instead of marching on Paris as their fathers had done in 1914, the Germans turned west and drove straight to the English Channel in an astonishingly rapid and ineptly opposed advance which split the French army in two, leaving the French and English divisions in Belgium in a perilous situation from which only the miracle of Dunkirk would save them. Establishing a corridor roughly 100 miles wide between the two main bodies of the enemy, the Germans first encircled the Allied armies in the north; and then, having beaten off the one attack that had any chance of breaking through the corridor and so of reuniting their sundered opponents, they crushed the remnant in the south and moved rapidly to overrun great swatches of France before an armistice was signed on June 22. The campaign had taken six weeks; besides honor, of which the sum is still being reckoned, it had cost France approximately 90,000 men killed, 200,000 wounded, and nearly 2,000,000 taken prisoner, including a haul of rueful generals.

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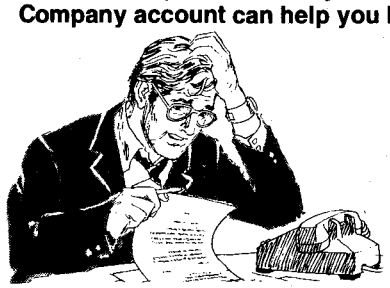

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tory march through the Arc de Triomphe in 1919, Alistair Horne's superbly readable narrative explores this question in its political, military, economic, and moral ramifications. Mr. Horne's pen gives instant life to everything in its path; like the German army, he sweeps easily before him the political contortions of the Third Republic, with its giddy succession of premiers, its government by crony and mistress, and its deep and virulent social divisions between left and right, the measure of which is a slogan then current on the right, "Better Hitler than Leon Blum."

But admirable as is his account of the social and political roots of the debacle, Mr. Horne's best pages are devoted to the historical psychology of the French army; specifically to the fatal dominance in that army of the lessons of Verdun—that battles are won on the defensive, that subterranean forts and surface redoubts offered a matchless means of protection, and, coloring these other motives with fear, that nothing like the 10-month slaughter of Verdun should ever be permitted to happen again. The French military mind remained fixed in the mold of 1916; Verdun gave birth to the Maginot Line and the doctrine of the continuous front. Meanwhile, the Germans clandestinely prepared themselves for the era of tanks, planes, and paratroops, and in the social organization of their army created a much more democratic ethos than that which prevailed in the class-ridden army of their enemy. With better morale and equipment, led by imaginative generals like Guderian and Rommel, and aided immeasurably by the social anarchy of the Third Republic, the Germans rolled up the French armies with an ease that contrasted unfavorably with the harder fight they had with the small British Expeditionary Force. Here, in the gallant fight put up by the BEF around Arras, is an argument for the paramountcy of the moral factor in the French defeat—for the view that the French, in a line Horne quotes from Meredith, were "betrayed by what was false within." That, however, is much too smug a conclusion. Rather, let us adopt the tragic perspective of Mr. Horne and say that the French lost in 1940 because of the terrible price in lives—1,315,000 from metropolitan France alone—they had to pay to win in 1918. To use the title of Mr. Horne's earlier book on Verdun, 1940 was part of "the price of glory."

Jack Beatty

Accidents Will Happen: The Case Against Nuclear Power by the Environmental Action Foundation

(Harper & Row, Perennial Library; $2.50 paper)

Spurred by the Three Mile Island accident, the Environmental Action Foundation has updated a collection of articles, *Countdown to a Nuclear Moratorium*. The foundation, an "information clearinghouse" on utility policies and nuclear economics, has recruited 21 authors including Ralph Nader, the energy consultant to the General Accounting Office, a US senator, and the president of the UAW. As its new title indicates, *Accidents Will Happen* is not an impartial assessment of various energy sources, but an attempt to awaken the public to the hazards of nuclear power: possible meltdowns due to lax safety precautions and inadequate back-up controls, no permanent waste-disposal sites, contamination from transporting nuclear fuel, cancer or genetic damage to workers exposed to low-level radiation.

But the book does not limit itself to enumerating nuclear risks. One chapter explains how a plant operates, including a description of fission, why a "young" reactor is less likely to melt down than an "old" one, and how uranium is enriched to make it fissionable—a process that consumes three percent of the nation's electricity. *Accidents Will Happen* also discusses the economics of nuclear energy: how tax laws and the cost-plus structure of utilities' rates encourage building plants and rushing them into operation. And it explains how consumers end up paying for clean-up and repair after most accidents. Several chapters touch on alternative energy sources, emphasizing conservation and solar power.

Though most of the book consists of thoughtful and informative explanation, some sections have an irritatingly overzealous tone. George R. Zachar's otherwise admirable chapter describing the workings of a plant occasionally slips into language more appropriate to a horror story: "the life-menacing technical side of atomic power," radiation spreading "invisibly and silently." Illogically, this rudimentary chapter is preceded by a lurid account of the Three Mile Island accident, apparently to whet the reader's appetite for sensationalism.

The risks and costs so clearly and soberly spelled out in many of the chapters make a convincing case against the continuation and expansion of nuclear power. Unfortunately, the few authors who try to bolster their arguments with inflammatory language weaken the book and lay it open to charges of alarmism. What we need is an authoritative, in-depth study evaluating all our energy needs and sources—which might convince us that we can live without nuclear power.

Lisa Derman

Correspondence, *from page 4*

harmful to individuals.

A different conception of mental illness, whereby although initially one chooses irrational conduct, eventually one is simply a captive of one's previous irrationality, could also be consistent with libertarian politics. The libertarian legal system could make distinctions among various degrees of responsibility, so that a person who is mentally afflicted as a result of earlier irrational choice might not be so directly responsible, e.g., for assault or homicide, as someone who took premeditated action. Indeed, this approach might give more careful heed to personal autonomy and moral responsibility than Dr. Szasz's position would seem to entail.

Libertarianism is often presented without any of the nuances. Once libertarians can spend many years on developing the fine points of their doctrine—as Marxists have been permitted by our intellectual forums—cases such as John Stuart Mill's man who is walking on to a bridge not knowing it's about to collapse—so that he is either saved coercively or left to perish—will be explored as fully as are difficult cases with which other theories, political or scientific, are required to cope.

Tibor R. Machan
Santa Barbara, California

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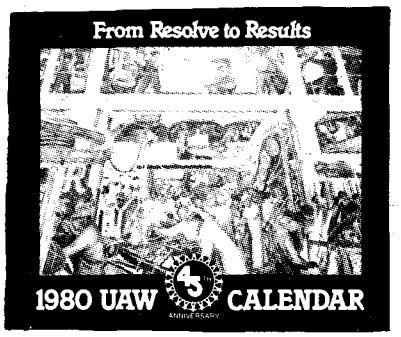

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THE NEW REPUBLIC MAGAZINE

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When the news came over the BBC World Service that the Soviet Union had moved into Afghanistan, we amateur military strategists immediately knew what was up. It was a reassertion of the age-old Russian quest for a warm-water port, celebrated in song and now the common currency of every journalist and anonymous State Department spokesman who wishes to show off a little historical insight. It's odd how tastes differ. I've never had the slightest desire for a warm-water port, have you? Of course we've never had to live through those Russian winters. Or perhaps it's one of those ethnic characteristics that are that are obviously genetically based. The Irish crave whiskey, blacks yearn for watermelon, and Russians jes' love dat warm-water port. The British like hot baths, so maybe this is the same instinct on a typically grander Russian scale. It does seem, though, that if this strange Russian craving is all that stands between us and world peace, there is an obvious solution that has been overlooked. Why not warm up the water in one of the ports they already have? A giant solar water heater for this purpose would make an ideal demonstration project for our government's extravagant Solar Energy Research Institute out in Colorado, and might make a very tempting bait if it were "linked" (as we foreign policy experts say) to an early pullout from Afghanistan. Then, instead of thundering across the barren Afghan wastes, the Red Army could be lolling on the beach at Vladivostock, sipping exotic rum concoctions, and snapping pictures of the native girls in their grass skirts.

Almost every business day, late in the afternoon, a messenger brings by several copies of a press release from the Washington office of Hill and Knowlton, the PR firm. Ordinarily these go straight to the recycling shed, where they are turned into those little cards that fall out of your *TNR* as soon as you open it up. One of these documents, though, carried a message so heartrending that I just have to share it with you. It came on December 19 and began: "TRUCK DEREGULATION TO MAKE CHRISTMAS MORE COSTLY." The client was not Santa Claus, but rather the American Trucking Association. The deregulation bill, supported by both President Carter and Senator Kennedy, would curtail the practice by which truckers get together with the help of the government to set minimum prices, and also end rules that force trucks to drive home empty after making a long-distance delivery. In short, it would start to make the trucking industry competitive again, which, as we know, will inevitably drive up the price of toys, plum pudding, and other trucked goodies. I dread to think what effect this callous plot to abandon defenseless truckers to the free market will have on Easter eggs, but I suspect I'll be finding out in due time.

Like Margaret Fuller declaring that she accepts the universe, President Carter's Pay Advisory Council has announced that it will recommend abandoning the administration's seven percent wage increase "guideline." The Pay Advisory Council, chaired by that hardy perennial, John Dunlop, is the latest accretion onto the increasingly complicated mechanism by which the administration pretends to determine how much inflation it will permit. The complications are essential to the pretense, since nobody in his or her right mind would abide by these guidelines voluntarily, and the government is decorously declining to enforce them in any way except for stern lectures. Instead, after every major union settlement, Alfred Kahn is trotted out with some chalk to explain how, in light of such-and-such an exclusion, and assuming it never rains in Oregon, and allowing for leap year, what was sold to the union rank-and-file as a 22 percent annual increase looks to the Carter administration like coming in just the teensiest little bit over its "ceiling" of seven. Presto, the guidelines are working. In computing the effect of cost-of-living clauses, for example, the administration assumes that inflation is running at six percent. A charming assumption, but people have been committed on less evidence of being out of touch with reality. The Pay Advisory Committee, recognizing the absurdity, recommends that the administration start assuming that inflation is seven and a half percent. That's what passes for hard-nosed realism in the world of inflation guidelines. The committee recommends a new "flexible" pay guideline of between seven and a half percent and nine and a half percent. This recommendation now goes to the Council on Wage and Price Stability, which said last week it is still waiting for the pay committee to produce "criteria" for deciding who fits where within the "flexible range." The suspense is killing me.

The larger satisfactions of making your living by editing other people's prose are somewhat amorphous and hard to describe (also sometimes hard to remember), but one of the smaller ones is being able to delete aphorisms by Machiavelli. I had this pleasure three times in the course of editing two articles this week. (Guess which two.) Writers (ugh! what a breed) just love to litter their prose with little gems from their betters like Machiavelli, Orwell, Mencken, Shaw, or Mark Twain. Not to mention St. Augustine, Voltaire, and Oscar Wilde. (Please.) Things got so bad that it became necessary to impose on my colleague Steve Chapman a six-month interdict against the use of any quotations from Dr. Johnson. The hiatus seems to have concentrated his mind wonderfully. As a result, we are considering the possibility of a permanent ban on any quotations from—and possibly even any reference to—de Tocqueville. Is there any observation about the modern American scene, no matter how inaccurate, that this Frenchman failed to make 150 years ago? A recent trend has been quotations from movies, especially *Casablanca*. Well I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore. From now on the rule is "Speak for yourself, John," as Shakespeare once said.

M.E.K.

drawing by Mike Peters

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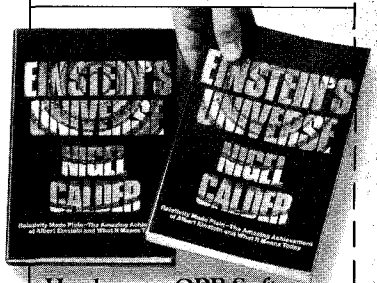

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